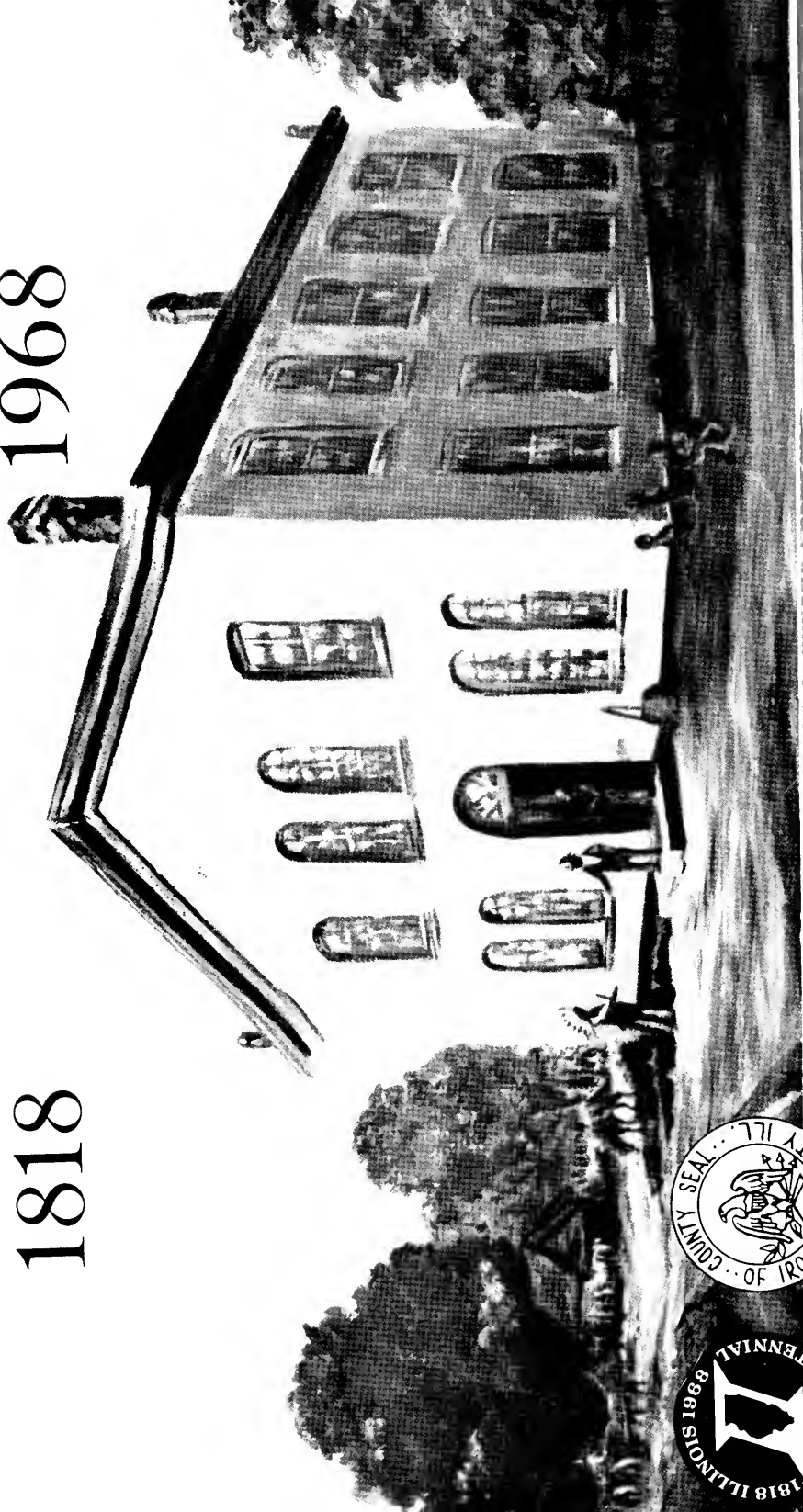


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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

History of Ir uois County

1818 1968



COVER PICTURE

The picture on the Front cover is of the Old Courthouse in Middleport. Planning for this building began in 1843 and construction completed in 1847. It was 40 feet square, two stories high and made of brick. All that remains of the Old Courthouse today is the square on which it stood, which is one block west of Westside school.

Two official seals are also displayed in the cover design. One is the Iroquois County Seal that is placed on all official documents of the County. A replica of this seal is on the west wall of the center hallway above the spiral staircase in the old courthouse on Cherry Street in Watseka.

The other seal is the official Illinois Sesquicentennial Seal and used throughout Illinois during 1968.

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

History of Iroquois County

Compiled by
JOHN DOWLING

Social Studies Teacher
Watseka Community High School

• 1875 •

Published by
Iroquois County Board of Supervisors
ROBERT R. HOLDEN, Chairman

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1752

Introduction

The Iroquois County Board of Supervisors presents this *History of Iroquois County* to the citizens of Iroquois County as part of our observance of the Illinois Sesquicentennial.

Each township supervisor was responsible for the history of his township. For the most part the individual township histories are the result of these articles written by different individuals. The responsibility of this writer was to edit these histories to bring about some uniformity among them. Deletions were necessary in some cases, and, where additional information was felt necessary, Beckwith's *History of Iroquois County* was the primary source used to provide this material. We have tried to be as factual as possible and hope we have made the minimum number of errors possible in a publication of this nature.

Much of the material in the general history of Iroquois County was taken from *The History and Geography of Iroquois County*, a booklet prepared by Mr. Ralph Moore of Watseka in 1956.

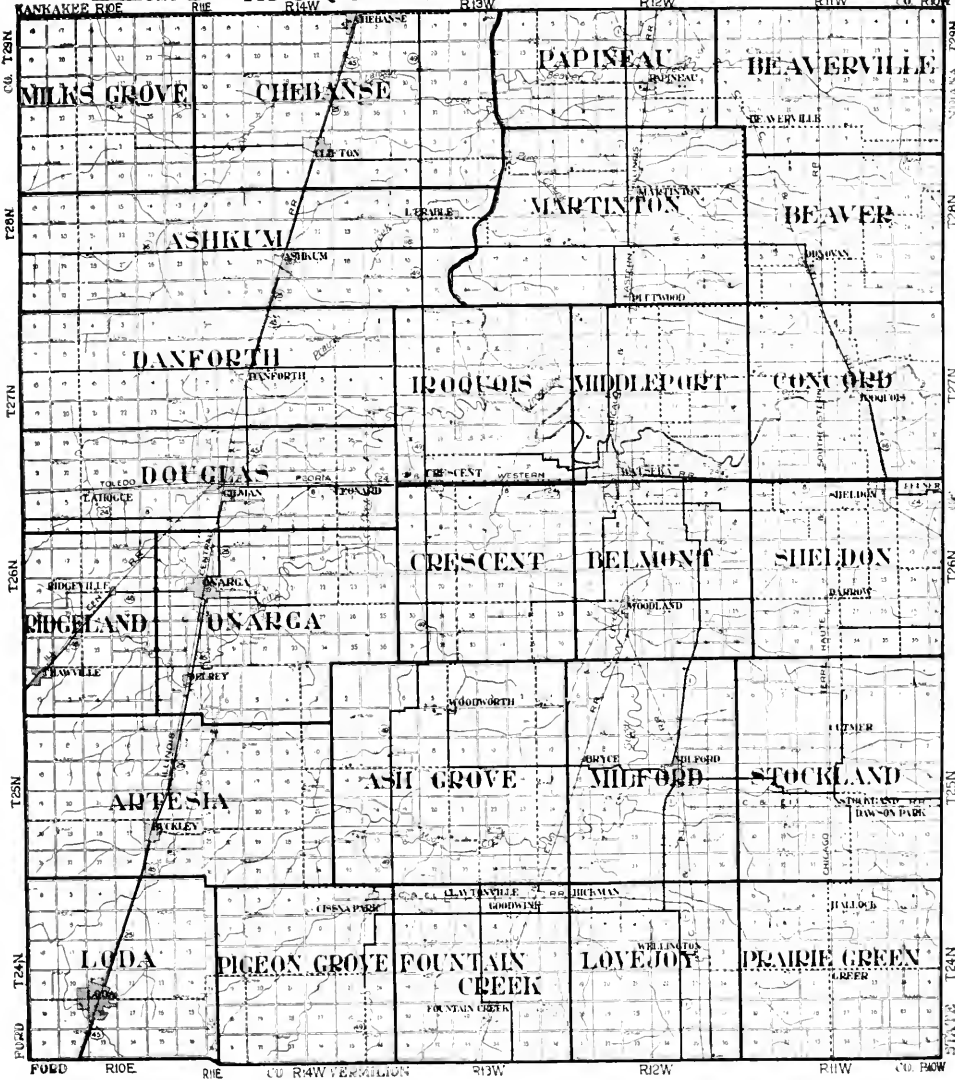
Acknowledgments

This author is indeed grateful to the Iroquois County Board of Supervisors for making this publication possible. It has been a rewarding and educational experience. A special thanks goes to the Sesquicentennial Committee of the Board of Supervisors which included Cecil Hamilton as Chairman and Bernard Fleming, Robert Holden, Mrs. William Fox, Ernest Ross, and Robert Sproull.

Others who have contributed their efforts are Mrs. Vera Jacobs, who proofread the material, Miss Sue Dubble and Miss Judy Stutsman, the typists, and my wife, Reta, for her cover design and her patience and assistance in the trials and tribulations in preparing this manuscript.

Persons contributing townships histories were; Mrs. John Crist, Mr. Robert Holden, Mr. C. Walsh, Mrs. Charles Healey, Mr. Harry Swanson, Mrs. Tylla Landes, Mrs. Theodore Pierce, Mrs. Clara German, Mr. T. Landes, Mrs. Mae Gelmers, Mrs. Bertha Reeves, Mrs. Rella Boyden, Mr. Ralph Moore, Mrs. John Bartell, Mr. G. M. Buchan, Mr. Henry Schleef, Mr. Bernard Fleming, Mr. Gil Johnson, Mr. William C. Merkle, Mrs. Marvin Craig, Mr. Robert C. Brouillette, Mrs. Vincent Poskin and Mr. Francis Lareau. County Clerk Herb Lietz prepared the material pertaining to the Board of Supervisors and Mrs. Marvin Craig contributed the article on the Historical Society.

IROQUOIS COUNTY ILL.



Population of Iroquois County By Townships — Census 1960

TOWNSHIP	POPULATION
Artesia	1411
Ash Grove	997
Ashkum	1514
Beaver	680
Beaverville	832
Belmont	2262
Chebanse	2530
Concord	741
Crescent	844
Danforth	993
Douglas	2248
Fountain Creek	667
Iroquois	640
Loda	1147
Lovejoy	694
Martinton	1094
Middleport	4505
Milford	2240
Milks Grove	389
Onarga	1987
Papineau	559
Pigeon Grove	1258
Prairie Green	803
Ridgeland	534
Sheldon	1648
Stockland	701
Total	33562

Iroquois County Board of Supervisors

The members of the County Board of Supervisors are the respective Supervisors of each of the 26 townships comprising Iroquois County. Each Supervisor or assistant acquired this position by an election held in the township. The County Board is the legislative body of the county. Their duties are varied and many.

The County Board is required by Statutes to provide two meetings each year; a regular meeting to be held the fourth Monday of June, and the annual meeting the second Tuesday of September, all other meetings are recessed sessions. The Iroquois County Board was organized February 26, 1833 and has been active since that date.

Each year in April the Board is required to reorganize. By this it is meant, that they hold an election to elect one of their members to be

chairman. The chairman is responsible for making appointments of members to the various committees to function in their respective capacities. At the present time there are 27 separate committees. These committees make reports to the Board. No action can be taken on county business without approval of the board. Board members are not salaried, they are on a per day pay while on county business only.

The Board is responsible to have a complete audit of all county funds expended. This audit must be conducted by an outside Certified Public Accountant or audit firm, and the audit is published and also a certified copy supplied to the State Auditor of Public accounts as required by Statutes.

The following picture is of the Iroquois County Board of Supervisors, County Clerk and Superintendent of Highways, Mr. John Devine.

**Iroquois County Board
of Supervisors—1968**



LIST OF SUPERVISORS, A.D. 1968

Robert R. Holden	Chairman
Herbert W. Lietz	Clerk

Town	Name	Postoffice Address
Artesia	Clarence A. Gehle	Buckley
Ash Grove	John F. Salmon	Cissna Park

Town	Name	Postoffice Address
Ashkum	Harold F. Lawson	Ashkum
Beaver	Bernard J. Fleming	Donovan
Beaverville	Glen M. Buchan	Beaverville
Belmont	Ernest L. Ross	Watseka
Chebance	Louis F. Wilking	Clifton
Concord	Gilbert Johnson	Watseka
Crescent	Henry D. Schleef	Crescent City
Danforth	William C. Merkle	Danforth
Douglas	John H. Gelmers	Gilman
Ft. Creek	John Crist	Milford
Iroquois	Roy M. Storm	Crescent City
Loda	Harry E. Swanson	Loda
Lovejoy	Robert R. Holden	Wellington
Martinton	Charles L. Hathaway	Martinton
Middleport	Martha A. Fox	Watseka
Middleport	Cecil Hamilton, Asst.	Watseka
Milford	Bertha M. Reeves	Milford
Milks Grove	Morey Wadleigh	Herscher
Onarga	Donald C. Morgan	Onarga
Papineau	Robert C. Brouillette	Martinton
Pigeon Grove	Albert Seggebruch	Cissna Park
Prairie Green	Ruth Cowan	Milford
Ridgeland	B. L. Eshleman	Thawville
Sheldon	Robert Sproull	Sheldon
Stockland	Chas. Williams	Milford

History of Iroquois County

Iroquois County is the only county in the United States having the name "Iroquois," a name originally applied to a confederation of tribes of North American Indians. According to tradition, a band of Iroquois Indians was once surprised and defeated upon the banks of the river now known as the Iroquois, by a war party of Illinois Indians, hence the name of the county and the river.

Iroquois County is bounded on the north by the county of Kankakee, on the east by the State of Indiana, on the south by Vermilion and Ford Counties, and on the west by Ford County. Iroquois County in area ranks third in the states, being 35 miles long and 32 miles wide, and containing 1120 square miles, only 130 square miles less than the state of Rhode Island. This county is exceeded in size only by McLean and LaSalle Counties in Illinois. Watseka, the county seat, is located a few miles east of the center of the county.

The surface of Iroquois County slopes from the south, east and west to the center and north of the county. Across the southern part of the county is the Bloomington Moraine and across the northwestern part of the county is the Marsailles Moraine. In the northeastern and eastern part of the county is the Iroquois Moraine which is an eastern and southern extension of the Marsailles Moraine system.

The lowest point in Iroquois County is along the north boundary where the Iroquois River enters Kankakee County. The elevation there is 610 feet above sea level. The highest point in Iroquois County is in the southeastern part of the county, 2 miles east and $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of Greer. The elevation there is just over 810 feet above sea level. The land in the moraine areas is gently rolling to hilly. The land between the moraines is usually rather flat. In these flat areas the land was swampy until it was drained by the early settlers. The largest swamp area was in the northwestern part of the county around the headwaters of the Vermilion River. It was called the Vermilion Swamp.

Iroquois County is drained mostly by the Iroquois River and its tributaries. In the northeastern part of the county a small area is drained by the Vermilion River and in the southeastern part of the county by the North Fork River.

When the first settlers came to Iroquois County the streams were clear with sand and gravel bottoms. As the land was placed under cultivation soil erosion began and now the streams are turbid with eroded materials. In many places in the county the small natural watercourses have been extended, deepened and straightened by dredging.

Many thousands of years ago huge sheets of ice were pushed down from the north and northeast to form the surface and soil of Iroquois County. As these ice sheets, or as we call them glaciers, moved forward they leveled off the land and pushed huge piles of earth, rocks, sand, and gravel before them. During a cold era the glacier would advance south-

ward and then as a warm era developed the glacier would melt gradually back to the north. As it melted the materials it had pushed before it were left in ridges at its farthest advance. These ridges are called moraines.

The last of these glaciers, the late Wisconsin, advanced from the northeast across Iroquois County to a line through Paris, Charleston, Shelbyville, Pana, Jacksonville, Macomb, Galesburg, and Rockford. Then as it melted and receded it left what we now call the Shelbyville Moraine. Again it advanced and this time it extended to Fowler, Indiana; Hoopes-ton; Champaign; Bloomington; Peoria; Princeton; and DeKalb. It melted and left what we now call the Bloomington Moraine. A third time it advanced and this time extended to St. Anne Pontiac, Marsailles, and Elgin. This time as it melted it left the Marsailles Moraine. A fourth and last time it advanced to Valparaiso, Indiana; Chicago Heights; Joliet, and east of the Fox River. As it melted it left the Valparaiso Moraine. The Iroquois Moraine is an eastward extension and southern extension of the Marsailles Moraine and joins the Bloomington Moraine near Fowler, Indiana.

As these glaciers melted a large lake was formed between the moraine and the retreating glacier. The one formed behind the Marsailles Moraine was called Lake Kankakee. It drained out through the Beaver Creek valley across central Iroquois County to the Vermilion River near Chatsworth. A belt of sand that extends from the Iroquois Moraine east of Watseka to the Bloomington Moraine southwest of Chatsworth is the shoreline of this drainage area.

The earth, over the bedrock of the county, was brought down by the glacier. It is called "glacial till." Its average depth over the county is about 100 feet. It is deepest at the south part of the county and shallowest in the northern part. Boulders and large rocks were rolled down by the glaciers and many of these can be found along the edge of the Iroquois Moraine northeast and east of Watseka. This type of deposit is called "boulder till." Throughout the glaciated area are beds of gravel. In these may be found large balls of clay that were rolled up by the glacier. Some of them are 4 feet in diameter and are called by the geological term "Rotelboden." This is a German meaning "round ball." Most of this glacial soil in Iroquois County is black earth and is found in the prairie areas. On the moraines the soil is of a lighter sandy type. A thin gray timber soil is found in areas where the land was cleared of trees for farming. A few spots of peaty soil are found in the old swamp beds.

The bedrock underlying Iroquois County is of limestone and forms a shallow saucer-like basin. This type of formation produces artesian, or as we sometimes call them "flowing wells." These are found in the central part of the county along the streams and are scattered over the prairie area of the western and southwestern part. The first of these artesian wells was found about 2 miles east of Onarga in 1855.

The limestone formation comes to the surface north of Iroquois

County in Kankakee County and west in Livingston County. In these areas are found limestone quarries. It lies too deep in Iroquois County to be quarried.

In the eastern part of Iroquois County some wells are drilled into this limestone formation. Most of these wells are over 300 feet deep. Many contain hydrogen sulfide gas which makes them smell like rotten eggs. This type of water is called "sulfur water." It can be removed by a special filter.

Most of Iroquois County is part of what is called the Grand Prairie. This open land extended from the Tippecanoe River in Indiana to the Mississippi River. The trees found in this great area were in narrow belts along the streams and in groves. The early settlers made their homes along the streams and in these groves. The trees were used to build their homes, for fuel, and for fence rails. A few saw mills exist in the county today to saw oak trees into railroad ties and rough lumber.

The county is underlaid with a thin coal deposit in the area west and South of the Iroquois River. These deposits are only a few inches thick and are therefore not commercially valuable.

As has been mentioned before there are gravel deposits from which gravel for roads and concrete work is dug.

Since much drainage work had to be done to make the swampy prairies usable for farming the layer of clay, under the black top soil, was used to make tile. Nearly every town in the county at one time had a tile mill. The last of these closed at Woodland in the late 1920's. In the early days of the county brick was made of this clay but it was too soft a brick and was soon discontinued.

Test wells for oil have been drilled in the county but so far no oil has been found.

Water power was used to operate grist mills at Milford and at Texas by the early settlers. This source of power was later displaced by steam engines. The flow of the streams of the county is not great enough for modern hydroelectric power generation.

The greatest natural resource of Iroquois County is its rich soil.

Iroquois County averages about 35 inches of rainfall per year. This is greatest in the western and northern part of the county.

The growing season averages about 160 days per year. In the southwestern third of the county the season will be a little longer.

Iroquois County was first settled in the winter of 1821-22 by Gurdon S. Hubbard, an Indian trader, then employed by the American Fur Company (John Jacob Astor & Co.). He was accompanied by Noel Vasseur, who worked for him. Hubbard came from Mackinaw, coasting down Lake Michigan in a boat of considerable size, and ascending the Chicago River, crossed the portage to the Des Plaines. Floating down the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers, he reached the present site of Old Middleport, a present-day part of Watseka. On the north side of the river, about one mile above this point, at the east end of the bend, where there was

a small Indian village, he established his headquarters and a trading post. He stopped at this point only one winter, from where later he moved up the river to a place afterward called Bunkum, the present site of the village of Iroquois.

Like many others who found themselves beyond civilization and among savages, Hubbard deemed it necessary to cement his friendship with the Indians by marrying an Indian woman, according to custom. For a wife he selected Watch-e-kee, the niece of a Pottawattamie chief.

The first permanent settlement of Iroquois County was simultaneously begun at two points—Milford and Bunkum, in the spring of 1830. The Courtright brothers and John H. Miller, all from Fountain County, Indiana, formed one party and came and settled in Bunkum. Hezekiah Eastburn then came here from Ohio. William Hana, Elizah Newcombe, and the widow McCulloch came with their families also. A tavern was kept at this place on the south side of the river by a Dr. Timothy Lacey, in 1831. Probably this was the first house of entertainment opened in the county.

Montgomery, an early settlement, as laid out for the proprietor, Richard Montgomery, May 9, 1835, by James H. Rees, who was deputed by Dan Beckwith, county supervisor of Vermilion County. It was situated on the south side of the river. Concord was also surveyed by Mr. Rees as deputy of Jonas Smith, surveyor of Iroquois County, in May, 1836. Henry Moore was the proprietor. This was the north bank opposite Montgomery. The locality, including these two places, has always been known as "Bunkum."

In the spring of 1830 the following persons settled in the vicinity of Milford: Samuel Rush, Hiram Miles, James Singleton, Daniel Barbe, Abram Miller, Joseph Cox, Joseph Reading, and a colored man. These people stayed but a short time. In the fall other families came including William Cox and William Pickerell and their families. These people were Quakers. In the spring of 1831 this little congregation of Friends built the first house of worship ever erected in Iroquois County. It was used for a school house as well as a church. Shortly after his arrival, Pickerell built a corn-cracker, dignified with the name of a mill, and until laid out in 1836, the place was called Pickerell's Mill, thus the name of Milford.

Early in 1834, a new settlement was begun on Upper Spring Creek in the vicinity of Del Rey, south of present-day Onarga. Ash Grove was settled in 1834 by Lewis Roberts, brother of Bishop Roberts, and his son-in-law John Nunemaker. Also on the river the town of Plato was surveyed and platted in May, 1836. This was when the internal improvement craze was at its peak. Extravagant and delusive expectations were formed concerning this enterprise. It was advertised in glowing colors in the Chicago and Lafayette papers; immense maps and posters were distributed in eastern cities, showing the whole landing of "Harbor Creek" lined with boats unloading and receiving merchandise. Lots were sold at fabulous prices, many persons in New York City investing in them. The proprietor nearly realized their ambition to secure the county seat when

it was removed from Bunkum. James Smith, an accomplished gentleman, who lived on Upper Spring Creek, was the chief promoter of this scheme. He died suddenly in September, 1839, at the age of thirty-two. The death of Smith was likewise the death of Plato.

The law made it the duty of the judge of the Circuit Court of Vermilion County, whenever he should be satisfied that the new county had 350 inhabitants, to grant an order for an election of three county commissioners, one sheriff, and one coroner to hold office until the next general election. The special election for first officers was on Monday, February 24, 1834.

Legislation was enacted that called for a three-man committee from outside the county to determine the location of the county seat. This decision was reached on April 15, 1837, a twenty-acre tract adjoining Montgomery county was selected. The locators called the site "Iroquois." County buildings were never built on this site but were rented in Montgomery for the short time the county seat was located in Iroquois.

The territory included within the present boundaries of Iroquois County was subjected to various stages of political evolution before the present county organization was perfected. Under the charter of 1609 supported by General George Rogers Clark's request, Virginia laid claim to all the country north and west of the Ohio River and organized it as the county of Illinois. In the year 1784, Virginia surrendered her claims to the territory to the government of the United States. This vast domain afterward became known as the Northwest Territory. While the Illinois country was still a part of the Northwest Territory, in the year 1790, we find Iroquois County a part of the county of Knox and so continued until February 3, 1801, when it became a part of the county of St. Clair, belonging to the Indiana Territory. The Illinois Territory was established by act of Congress on February 3, 1809.

This county continued to be a part of St. Clair County until the 14th of September, 1812, when upon reorganization it became a part of Edwards County. In the year 1816 the Iroquois country became a part of Crawford County and there remained until Illinois was admitted into the Union in 1818.

When Illinois was admitted as a state, she had but fifteen organized counties. One, Crawford County, embraced all the part of the state lying north of a line running east and west near the present site of Louisville, Illinois, the county seat of Clay County. It also included the area east of the third principal meridian, which runs due north from the mouth of the Ohio River.

March 22, 1819, the territory included within the present limits of Iroquois County became a part of Clark County. In 1823 Edgar County was organized and what is now Iroquois County was attached to Edgar. It remained thus until the county of Vermilion was organized in 1826, after which it continued until the formal organization took place February 26, 1833.

Gurdon S. Hubbard, while a representative from Vermilion County in the 8th General Assembly of Illinois 1832-1834, was instrumental in procuring the passage of the act creating Iroquois County. The county embraced all that territory lying north of its present south line and east of its present west line and extended north, forming a rectangle and about one-third of what is now Will County. As then established, Iroquois County extended from the north line of Vermilion to the then south line of Cook County.

Will County was created in the year 1836 and extended south to the Kankakee River. The river, except for a short distance at the northwest corner of the county, became the northern boundary of Iroquois County.

In the year 1853 Kankakee County was created from territory which had belonged to the counties of Iroquois and Will. Thus Iroquois was limited to its present boundaries.

In 1835 the town of Montgomery offered the county 20 acres of land on which to locate a permanent county seat. This land was located just east of Montgomery and was platted as a town site in 1836 under the name of Iroquois. The offer was accepted and the county seat was established at Iroquois. No buildings were erected so space was rented for county offices and a courtroom in Montgomery. As no town ever developed at Iroquois the plat was later vacated.

There was general dissatisfaction with the county seat so far from the center of the county. In 1838 an act was obtained from the Illinois legislature to relocate the county seat. The town of Middleport offered the county 52 lots to locate the county seat there. The offer was accepted and Middleport became the county seat in 1839.

In 1858 the Peoria & Oquawka Railroad was building its line east from Peoria to the Indiana state line. The route was surveyed through Middleport but a dispute arose in regard to the town donating land for the depot grounds. A group of land owners to the southeast of Middleport offered a proposition to the railroad. This offer was accepted and the route ran south of Middleport. A new town, called South Middleport, came into being about a mile southeast. The name was changed in 1865 to Watseka and upon incorporation of Watseka, Middleport became a part of that town. The old courthouse in Middleport was abandoned and a new one built in Watseka.

About the years of 1836-37 the people of the state lost their heads in a rash of speculation. A great system of public improvements had been drawn up by the state legislature. Railroads were to be built, canals were to be dug, and the rivers would be cleared for navigation. A rash of "paper" towns broke out. Plats were filed and lots sold and resold. Many sales were to investors in the East. Iroquois County did not escape this madness. The following towns were platted in 1836-37: Middleport, Milford, Concord, Iroquois, Burlington, Savanna, Plato, Point Pleasant, Texas, and Iroquois City. Of these ten towns only Middleport, Milford, Concord, and Burlington were developed. Of the rest nothing remains

but some plats filed in the office of the county recorder. Burlington was platted just east of Milford and became part of that town. Savanna was located 2 miles north of Milford, Point Pleasant was located at the mouth of Spring Creek, and Iroquois City across the river from Texas. Plato and Texas remain as place names in the county and Iroquois has become the name of Concord.

After the establishment of the county seat at Middleport, the first county building to be erected was a jail. It was made of hewed logs and was 16 x 20 feet in size. It cost the county \$159.30.

In 1843 it was decided to build a courthouse. This was to be a two-story brick structure, 40 x 40 feet square. The downstairs was to be the courtroom with offices for the county officials upstairs. To defray the cost of the new building the sum of \$1506 was appropriated for county funds. To this was to be added the receipts from the sale of the remaining town lots given by Middleport for locating the county seat there. Still another source of funds was anticipated. The county owned some land along the Salt Fork River west of Danville. This land had salt springs on it and was part of some similar land given by the federal government to Vermilion County before Iroquois County was formed. It had been hoped that the salt springs would be developed commercially and the income was to be used to build a bridge over the Vermilion River at Danville and the Iroquois River at Montgomery. The land was never developed so Iroquois County retained a share of either 40 or 80 acres (the record is not clear). It was decided to sell this land and a representative was sent to Danville to dispose of it. The best offer he could obtain was in trade for a horse. The trade was made and the horse taken to Chicago and sold. The records do not say how much this transaction added to the court house building fund. The new building was completed in 1847.

In 1865 Middleport became a part of Watseka and it was decided to abandon the court house in Middleport and build a new one in Watseka. Until the new building was completed the county offices were located in a building just east of the present Concord Loan Co. On October 16, 1866 about 2 o'clock a.m. the building caught fire and many county records were destroyed. It was thought that the fire was set by disgruntled citizens of Middleport over the removal of the court house to Watseka. The new court house was completed in 1866. Additions were made to it in 1881 and 1927.

All that remains of the old court house is the square on which it stood. This is now a small park located one block west of the West Watseka School. A picture of the court house appears in the large painting on the north wall of the present circuit court room.

The new court house had the county jail in its basement. One of the original cell blocks can be seen there today. A new jail and sheriff's residence was built in 1893.

The 240-acre county farm was purchased in 1857 for \$3100.

In 1851, a movement was begun in Kankakee to form a new county out of the north part of Iroquois County and the south part of Will County. Most of the area proposed to be taken from Iroquois County wished to remain at it was. However, in an election held in 1853, the formation of the new county was approved. It was said that the votes of the laborers constructing the Illinois Central railroad carried the election. At this time the present boundaries of Iroquois County were set.

In 1856 a movement was begun to form a new county from that part of Vermilion County that extended around the southwest corner and along the west side of Iroquois County. This movement included a plan to detach the southwest part of Iroquois and include it in the new county. This scheme originated in Loda, which was to be the new county seat if the plan was successful. Great opposition developed in the remainder of Iroquois County and in Prospect City (Paxton). The move was defeated and only the Vermilion County area became Ford County in 1860.

Before the building of railroads in Iroquois County the farmers had a difficult time marketing their livestock and grain. It had to be taken to either Lafayette or Chicago.

Gurdon Hubbard's pack trains had made a route from Vincennes through Danville to Chicago. This route was known as "Hubbard's Trail." Later a state road was surveyed from Danville to Chicago which followed, with a few slight changes, the old trail. Another route was laid out in 1830 by Ben Butterfield of Danville. It left Hubbard's Trail just south of Hoopestown and went northwest across the prairies to Spring Creek. It followed Spring Creek and then turned north to pass through Bourbonnais Grove and Lockport to Chicago.

After the formation of the county roads were surveyed but they were few and bad. The thoughts of the people then turned to water transportation. In 1847 the Kankakee and Iroquois Navigation and Manufacturing Company was organized. Its purpose was to promote the development of water transportation on the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers. Sandbars and snags had to be removed and a way found to cross the limestone ledges that blocked the rivers at Wilmington, Rock Creek, and Momence on the Kankakee and at Sugar Island and L'Erable on the Iroquois. A lock was built at Wilmington that summer and fall but it washed out in the spring flood the following year. Before more work could be done the building of the railroads stopped all development of water transportation.

In 1851 the Illinois Central Railroad Company was chartered. It was to build a railroad from Cairo to Freeport, from Freeport to Chicago, and from Chicago to Centralia. To help defray the cost of construction the federal government granted the company the even-numbered sections of land for a distance of six miles wide and each side of the proposed route. By 1853 the line was completed from Chicago to Del Rey in Iroquois County. In 1856 it was completed to Centralia. Onarga was the first railroad station in Iroquois County.

In 1857 a railroad, called the Peoria & Oquawka Eastern Extension

Railroad, was completed to Gilman. By 1859 it was completed to the Indiana State line. It was later called the Logansport, Peoria & Burlington; then the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw; and finally the Toledo, Peoria & Western. It stopped its passenger service about 1928 and is now a freight road. It runs from Burlington and Keokuk, Iowa, through Peoria, to Effner on the Indiana State line. At Effner it connects with the Pennsylvania system.

In 1860 a railroad was projected across Iroquois County from Lafayette, Indiana, LaSalle, Illinois. It entered the county about five miles southeast of Sheldon and passed through Watseka and Ashkum in a north-westerly direction. This railroad was never built.

In 1871 the Illinois Central built a line from Gilman to Springfield. Later this was extended to St. Louis.

The Chicago, Danville & Vincennes Railroad Company built a line from Danville to Chicago in 1871. The line was originally surveyed through Sheldon and Iroquois but due to vigorous action by the citizens of Watseka, its route was changed. In 1877 the name was changed to the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad.

In 1872 the Cincinnati, Lafayette & Chicago Railroad Company built a line from Lafayette, Indiana, to Kankakee, Illinois. It was later purchased by the Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati & St. Louis Railroad Company (better known as the Big Four). During the 1930's the line was purchased by the New York Central system. The road runs from Cincinnati to Kankakee and over the Illinois Central line from Kankakee to Chicago.

In 1882 the Strawn & Indiana State line Railroad Company constructed a line from the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad just north of Wellington to Cissna Park. It was taken over by the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. In 1956 the tracks were removed from the junction north of Wellington to the Hickman Elevator.

In 1901 the Chicago & Eastern Illinois constructed a line from a mile south of Milford through Stockland to Freeland Park, Indiana. This line was removed a number of years ago.

In 1902 the Chicago & Eastern Illinois constructed a line from a mile south of Woodland to southern Illinois and to St. Louis.

The last railroad in Iroquois County to be built was the Chicago, Terre Haute and Southern. It was built to haul coal to Chicago from Brazil, Indiana. This railroad was built in 1905 and is now part of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul system.

For almost one hundred years after Hubbard's Trail was laid out the roads of Iroquois County were bogs of mud in wet weather, beds of dust in dry weather, and frozen ruts in winter. The coming of the Model-T Ford in 1912-13 and the increasing number of automobile owners led to a demand for all-weather roads. Three state highways were laid out across Iroquois County for future development. The first of these, Illinois Route 1, was called the Dixie Highway; the second, U. S. Route 45, was

called the Egyptian Trail; and the third, U. S. Route 24, was called the Cornbelt Route. They were marked by symbols on fence posts and telephone poles. The symbol of the Dixie Highway was a bale of cotton on a red background with the word "Dixie" above and the word "Highway" below the cotton bale. The Egyptian Trail symbol was a black pyramid on a yellow background with the letter "E" on the left and the letter "T" on the right sides of the pyramid. The symbol of the Cornbelt Route was two ears of yellow corn standing on end on a white background. By following these symbols a traveler could get across country on fairly good roads.

Beginning in 1920 the State of Illinois embarked on a program of building concrete highways. The first one constructed in Iroquois County was the Dixie Highway followed by the Egyptian Trail and the Cornbelt Route. Later U. S. 52 and Illinois 116, then Illinois 49, and finally U. S. 54 were built.

With the building of the state highways came improvement of the rural roads. Oil, gravel, crushed rock, and concrete pavement now enable one to drive almost anywhere in the county in any kind of weather.

The early industries of Iroquois County were those of any pioneer area. There were grist mills at Milford and Texas, sawmills at Middleport and Texas, and every town had a blacksmith shop. Later there were distilleries at Middleport and Loda, wagon factories at Watseka and Milford, flax seed processing mills at Buckley and Gilman, and many towns had creameries and cheese factories.

When the prairies were settled there was a need for tile to drain the sloughs and swamps. Since a good quality clay was easily obtainable in most places in the county, tile mills and brick yards sprang up in many towns. The last of these to suspend operation was the one at Woodland. It closed down in the late 1920's.

There were at one time two canneries operating in the county, one at Milford and one at Onarga. The Onarga cannery closed in the 1930's leaving the one at Milford the only one in operation. It cans sweet corn and asparagus.

With the invention of the telephone and the electric light many towns had local telephone exchanges and power plants. Those are now mainly in the hands of large companies.

Following World War I, a number of small industries located in the county. Some of these soon faded out. Of these a dress factory remains in operation at Gilman. Later three companies located plants at Watseka. They are the TRW, Inc., Uarco, and the Electronic Components Co. The first manufactures radio condensers, the second business forms, and third fluorescent light ballasts and starters. There is a corn drying plant located at Gilman, hybrid seed corn plants at Gilman and Milford, and a poultry processing plant at Loda.

After building houses the next building usually erected by the early settlers was a schoolhouse. This building might also serve as a church on Sundays. The teacher might be the minister, the doctor, or anyone who

had had some schooling. Occasionally the teacher might have attended an academy or a college. The typical school of the time was the "subscription school" with each family paying tuition for children who attended school.

Laws in regard to the establishment of school were enacted by the Illinois legislature in 1825, 1827, 1845, and 1870. There must have been a number of schools established in Iroquois County under the law of 1845, as a map of the county in 1860 shows six rural schools. The law of 1845 provided for the establishment of schools and for the levying of a tax to support them, if at least two-thirds of the voters of an area approved the action. The law of 1870 made the formation of school districts and the levying of taxes for their support mandatory. Compulsory school attendance also came into being. This was the beginning of the era of the one-room rural school. By 1914 there were 232 elementary school districts in Iroquois County and 209 were of the one-room type.

After 1870 a few of the elementary districts, of the larger towns, extended their schools upward to include two, three, or four years of high school. By 1914 this practice had spread to include about 20 towns of the county. In 1914 legislation was passed permitting the formation townships into township high school districts. This was the beginning of a dual system of schools in the county. Under this law township high schools were established at Milford, Stockland, Wellington, Donovan, Loda, and Onarga. In 1918 the legislature provided for the formation of areas that were not townships into community high school districts. Under this law community high schools were established at Gilman, Danforth, Ashkum-Clifton, Chebanse, Martinton, Iroquois, Sheldon, Watseka, Cissna Park, Buckley, Thawville, and Crescent City. Some of these schools were only two or three years schools.

In 1859 a law was enacted that permitted two or more school districts to consolidate if the voters so wished. No advantage was taken of this law in Iroquois County until about 1940. By that time decreasing enrollments and increasing costs had caused the closing of a number of rural schools. In these cases the district organization was retained and tuition paid for the pupils at a nearby school. After 1940 there were a number of consolidations of rural schools with a town elementary school to form community consolidated grade school districts. There was one consolidation of high school districts, Gilman and Danforth. One area, Stockland, consolidated its high school and elementary school districts to form a 12 grade community consolidated district.

In 1947 legislation permitting the formation of unit districts was passed. These districts included all 12 grades and might cover an area of more than one town. Eight such districts were organized in Iroquois County: Onarga, Gilman, Central, Donovan, Sheldon, Cissna Park, Wellington and Buckley. The following are the towns they included:

Onarga—Onarga, Del Rey, and Ridgeville
Gilman—Gilman, Danforth and LaHogue
Central—Ashkum, Clifton, and Chebanse

Donovan—Donovan, Iroquois, Martinton, and Beaverville.
Sheldon—Sheldon and Effner
Cissna Park—Cissna Park and Claytonville
Wellington—Wellington and Greer
Buckley—Buckley and Loda

At present there are 19 school districts in Iroquois County. Besides the eight unit districts they are:

Community Consolidated (8 grade)—Stockland
Community High School—Watseka and Crescent City
City Elementary—Watseka
Board of Director Districts—West Watseka
Township High School—Milford
Community Consolidated Grade School—Milford, Bryce-Ash Grove, Woodland, Crescent City, Middleport (Pittwood).

In 1863 the Methodist Church established an academy at Onarga calling it the Grand Prairie Seminary. This was a coeducational school of high school level. With the organization of public high schools it gradually declined until it was closed in 1916. In 1917 it was opened again as the Onarga Military School.

The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) had four elementary schools operating in Iroquois County. These were located at Buckley, Woodworth, in rural Ash Grove Township, and at Chebanse. The Roman Catholic Church had a grade and high school at Beaverville. They were named as follows:

Buckley—St. John's	Chebanse—Zion
Woodworth—St. Paul's	Beaverville—Holy Family Academy
Rural Ash Grove—St. John's	

The first church established in Iroquois County was a Friend's Church at Milford. Another Friend's Church was established at Montgomery and a Methodist Church in the Belmont Community. The first Presbyterian Church in the county was established in Middleport. With the coming of the French, Roman Catholic Churches were established at L'Erable and St. Mary (Beaverville). The Germans and the Swedes brought the Lutheran Church. With the Apostolic Church (New Amish) to Cissna Park and Claytonville. The Dutch, at Danforth, established the Reformed Church. Other churches were established until today they number as follows:

Methodist—22	Jehovah's Witnesses—1
Roman Catholic—9	Congregational—2
Lutheran (Missouri Synod)—10	Episcopal—2
Lutheran (American Synod)—5	Evangelical United Brethren—3
Presbyterian—4	Evangelical Lutheran—2
Friends—1	Evangelical and Reformed—2
Christian—10	Seventh day Adventists—1
Church of God—1	Reformed—1
Church of the Nazarene—5	Apostolic Christian—2
Pilgrim Holiness—1	Union (non-denominational)—2
Baptist—2	

Every town in the county has at least one church and there are 10 rural churches.

The Iroquois Hospital at Watseka was built in 1914. An addition was made in 1950 and another addition is now being constructed. At one time there were hospitals in Milford and Gilman. There is also a hospital in Clifton.

Before the presidential campaign of 1856 the people of Iroquois County were mostly Jacksonian Democrats. There were very few Whigs. In 1856 the new Republican Party found many supporters for its first campaign in Iroquois County. A big rally was held at Middleport and delegations from all parts of the county paraded and listened to political speeches. The parade was led by the Momence Brass Band.

In 1873 a "farmers' and laborers'" party attempted to break off the regular Republicans but they were badly defeated at the polls. With the exceptions of the presidential elections of 1932 and 1936 the county has regularly gone Republican. Few Democrats have been elected to office in Iroquois County.

Politics and newspapers seem to go together. Many of the early papers published in the county had strong political coloring. The first newspaper published in the county was the IROQUOIS JOURNAL which began publication at Middleport in 1851. It was a weekly paper. Other papers soon appeared in other towns of the county. It seems that a paper was published in each town at some time or another.

At present a daily paper, THE IROQUOIS COUNTY TIMES, is published in Watseka. The following weeklies are published in the county at present:

Watseska—THE REPUBLICAN
Clifton—THE ADVOCATE
Cissna Park—THE NEWS
Gilman—THE STAR
Loda—THE TIMES

Milford—THE HERALD-NEWS
Onarga—THE LEADER AND REVIEW
Sheldon—THE JOURNAL

At the time of its organization Iroquois County was governed by three county commissioners. With the increase in population a demand for a more representative government arose. In the fall of 1855 an election was held at which time the people of the county voted to go under township organization. A committee of three men was appointed to divide the county into townships. This was done and eleven townships were organized in 1856. They were as follows:

Ash Grove	Chebanse	Middleport
Beaver	Crab Apple (Stockland)	Onarga
Belmont	Loda	Wygant (Papineau)
Concord	Milford	

The following is a table of township organization:

Artesia—1864 (from parts of Loda and Onarga)
Ash Grove—1856
Ashkum—1861 (from Chebanse)
Beaver—1856
Beaverville—1916 (from parts of Beaver and Papineau)

Belmont—1856
 Chebanse—1856
 Concord—1856
 Crescent—1877 (from Belmont and first called Grennard)
 Danforth—1877 (from Douglas and Ashkum)
 Douglas—1861 (from Onarga)
 Fountain Creek—1869 (from Ash Grove)
 Iroquois—1858 (from Middleport)
 Loda—1856
 Lovejoy—1868 (from Milford)
 Martinton—1857 (from Papineau and first called Buchanan)
 Middleport—1856
 Milford—1856
 Mills Grove—1872 (first called Wygant)
 Onarga—1856
 Papineau—1856 (first called Wygant)
 Pigeon Grove—1876 (from Loda and Fountain Creek)
 Prairie Green—1858 (from Stockland)
 Ridgeland—1878 (from Onarga)
 Sheldon—1868 (from Concord)
 Stockland—1856 (first called Crab Apple)

The people in Iroquois County are for the most part law-abiding citizens. However, the first murder trial and execution in the county was the trial and execution of a man for a murder committed near Chicago. His lawyers asked that the case be tried in some other county than Cook so it was held in Iroquois County at Montgomery. The man was found guilty and hanged from an oak tree on the north bank of the Iroquois River across from Montgomery. This was in 1836.

In 1862 John McDowell murdered James Hare in Ashkum and was tried and hung in the court room of the old court house in Middleport. In 1865 Francis Harper was tried for the murder of D. W. Nelson, near Gilman, and hung in the court house yard.

The county had one lynching. In 1871 a Martin Meara, who lived between Gilman and Onarga, beat his eleven year old son so badly that the boy died. Meara was arrested and taken to the county jail in Watseka. A mob took him from the jail on July 5, 1871 and hung him from a tree along Sugar Creek west of Watseka.

There is no record of any Iroquois County men serving in the Mexican War of 1846-48. However, in the Civil War the county furnished over 2,000 men for the Union army. Most of these served with the Western Army in the Mississippi campaigns. In the Spanish-American war of 1898 there were a few Iroquois County men in the service. In World Wars I and II, the county furnished many men and some women for the armed forces.

In 1833 Iroquois County had a population of 350, in 1860 a population of 16,000, and in 1950 a population of 32,348. Fifty-one per cent of the population is found in incorporated towns and forty-nine per cent in the unincorporated areas. Iroquois County ranks 41st among the 102 counties of the state in Illinois in population.

The following table gives a list of the towns platted in Iroquois County, their type of organization and population:

Ashkum—platted 1855
 village organization
 1950 population 420—1960-601
 Bairdton—platted 1863
 became a part of Loda
 Bryce—platted 1904
 never incorporated
 Buckley—platted 1862
 village organization
 1950 population 554—1960-690
 Burlington—platted 1836
 became part of Milford
 Chebanse—platted 1854
 village organization
 1950 population 739—1960-995
 Cissna Park—Platted 1882
 village organization
 1950 population 660—1960-803
 Claytonville—platted 1882
 never incorporated
 Clifton—platted 1861
 village organization
 1950 population 734—1960-1,018
 Crescent—(Crescent City p.o.)
 platted 1869
 village organization
 1950 population 324—1960-533
 Danforth—platted 1872
 village organization
 1950 population 385—1960-394
 Darrow—platted 1907
 never incorporated
 Dawson Park—platted 1901
 never incorporated
 Del Rey—platted 1856
 never incorporated
 Donovan—platted 1873
 village organization
 1950 population 327—1960-320
 Effner (platted as Haxby—platted 1868
 never incorporated
 Fountain Creek—platted as Hopwood—
 platted 1905
 never incorporated
 Gilman—platted 1858
 city organization
 1950 population 1602—1960-1704
 Goodwine—platted 1882
 never incorporated
 Iroquois—platted 1836
 plat vacant
 Iroquois—(platted as Concord)—platted
 1836
 village organization
 1950 population 232—1960-231
 Iroquois City—platted 1836
 plat vacated
 LaHogue—platted 1871
 never incorporated
 Leonard—platted 1899
 never incorporated
 L'Erable—platted 1857
 never incorporated
 Loda—platted 1854
 village organization
 1950 population 559—1960-585
 Minton—platted 1873
 village organization
 1950 population 292—1960-314
 Middleport—platted 1836
 became a part of Watseka
 Milford—platted 1836
 city organization
 1950 population 1648—1960-1699
 Montgomery—platted 1835
 plat vacated
 Onarga—platted 1854
 village organization
 1950 population 1455—1960-1397
 Papineau—platted 1871
 village organization
 1950 population 157—1960-169
 Pittwood—platted 1873
 never incorporated
 Plato—platted 1836
 plat vacated
 Point Pleasant—platted 1837
 plat vacated
 Ridgeville—platted 1871
 never incorporated
 St. Mary's (Beaverville P.O.)—platted
 1859
 village organization
 1950 population 383—1960-430
 Savanna—platted 1837
 plat vacated
 Sheldon—platted 1860
 village organization
 1950 population 1114—1960-1137
 Stockland—platted 1901
 never incorporated
 Texas—platted 1836
 plat vacated
 Thawville—platted 1872
 village organization
 1950 population 267—1960-246
 Trumanville—platted 1901
 plat vacated
 Watseka (platted as South Middleport)—
 platted 1860
 city organization
 1950 population 4235—1960-5219
 Wellington—platted 1872
 village organization
 1950 population 300—1960-334
 Woodland—platted 1876
 village organization
 1950 population 334—1960-344
 Woodworth—platted ?
 never incorporated

Artesia Township

Artesia township is the second from the southern line of the county in the western tier of townships. Spring Creek runs nearly through the center of the township. The Illinois Central Railroad also travels through the center of the township through Buckley.

The township of Artesia received its name from the Artesian wells located in the townships. The Indians referred to these flowing wells as living water.

The early settlements of Artesia were along the thin belt of timber along Spring Creek. The early settlers were mainly interested in the raising of cattle. Mr. Jacob Hill appears to be the earliest followed by Mr. J. S. Clove and Mr. J. A. Drake. Other settlers soon followed who were also in the stock raising business, but they also pursued other agricultural interests.

Artesia Township, organized on March 17, 1864, had originally been a part of Loda and Onarga townships. The principal officers elected for the township at this time were J. S. Pusey as Supervisor; W. G. Riggs as Clerk; and E. L. Gibson as Assessor.

The agricultural development of Artesia Township can be traced to an agreement by George A. Tallman of Utica, New York to purchase thousands of acres here at \$1.00 per acre. He drained the land at his own expense, and the result of this project is an area that is quite valuable agriculturally.

The town of Buckley was founded by Mr. Ira A. Manley in 1856. He signed a contract with the Illinois Central Railroad for the land where Buckley is today. After planning a shipping point between Onarga and Loda, he built a station to handle the business and named it Buckley after a relative in Philadelphia. He was joined in the following year by Mr. Franklin Pierson. Both Manley and Pierson were responsible for the early building that took place in Buckley.

W. J. Riggs, of Chester County, Pennsylvania came to Buckley in 1859 and opened the first store there. In the same year Mr. Manley signed his contract for the land to John A. Koplin of Philadelphia. Koplin secured a post office and changed the name of the town temporarily to Bulkley instead of the present Buckley.

On January 2, 1871, the residents of Buckley voted to incorporate. A short time later five trustees were elected to govern Buckley—Eli Strawn, E. D. Hartshorn, J. B. Merserve, J. G. McClave and E. Luther. At the first meeting of the trustees Eli Strawn was chosen president.

The Methodist Church was organized by Reverend Thomas Cotton about 1860. Mr. W. G. Riggs was a very valuable ally to Reverend Cotton in the establishment of this church. During the Civil War Rev. Cotton served in the Union Army.

As early as 1866 a number of German families moved to Buckley primarily from Downer's Grove in Cook County. These people, members of the Lutheran Church, officially organized the Lutheran Church in 1869.

Ash Grove Township

The present boundaries of Ash Grove Township were established on September 15, 1868, and political headquarters established at Glenwood, which is now known as Pitch-In in the southern part of the township.

Most of the land in this area was deep black loam with plenty of moisture; there was some swamp land with possibilities of drainage. The value of this soil with its great possibilities was recognized by the first settler Robert R. Roberts, in 1833. He was a Methodist minister with deep religious convictions. He contracted with the government for eighty acres of this land for \$1.25 an acre.

Soon other settlers followed: Henry Skeels who settled near Spring Creek, John Hemmel and John Nunemaker both came in 1835, John Henry who came from Lawrenceville, Indiana, and settled on 80 acres one and one-half miles east of Glenwood. He started a sawmill and also ground grain for the settlers, following were other settlers, Lewis Brock and son, Allen and Wesley Harvey.

In the autumn of 1838 more settlers arrived. Joseph Nunemaker was the first white child born in this township in 1835. The first wedding was at the home of Lewis Roberts, whose daughter Sara was married to Henry Skeels in 1838.

The first pioneer school was raised on March 4, 1841, one-fourth mile west of Glenwood. This school was run on a private plan with each pupil paying the teacher, Lewis Roberts, \$1.50 for each three-months' term. Fourteen pupils attended the first term. Later this school was merged into a public school.

The first Post Master was John Nunemaker, who handled the mail from his home, having received his commission from the government in 1849. The mail was brought from Milford by horseback once a week for the sum of \$25 a year. Later the post office was in the general store owned by Mr. Nunemaker. Mr. Harvey was responsible for having the name of the post office changed to Ash Grove. The mail came three times a week by horse and buggy from Milford. Henry Childs, the mail carrier, was equipped with a two seated open buggy with plenty of horse blankets and robes to protect the passengers he was permitted to carry. The route he took was to Queen City (which is now Schwer), then to Woodworth, then to Ash Grove. In case there was no mail for Queen City, he omitted that stop and went directly to Woodworth, saving mileage.

The name Ash Grove was chosen because of a real big old ash tree that had fallen across the creek. There were no other ash trees any where in the grove and the peculiarity of this tree being where it was produced the name Ash Grove. Ash Grove-Pitchin had about 150 residents in 1871-1880. The village followed the road north and south. Running from north to south on the west side were houses of Silas Brock, John Herman, the general store, the Herman blacksmith shop, Dr. L. D. Hackett, Bill Scott, and Henry Childs. On the east side were the Harveys, the Koglers, the Turner Drug Store, the Hotel, the Methodist Church, and the parsonage.

Going east was the Hamilton home on the south side of the road, and the Hill and Nebekers on the north side, and at the edge of the village was the Henneike farm. During development of Ash Grove a C & E I railroad spur was brought from Wellington to Cissna Park in 1882. This was bad for Ash Grove, as a booming town was going up just six miles away. Many citizens began to move to that town including Isaac Miller Hamilton, Turner, Young, Brock, Harvey, Bishop, Herman, Dr. Hackett and others. Gradually they moved away. Today, 1968, all that is left of the former village is the Harvey home, the Turner home, the Herman home, the Hackett home, and the Hamilton home.

While Ash Grove was growing, another small town was developing. It was Woodworth located on the northwest corner of the August Luecke farm. It began with the blacksmith shop of Fred Kruger who located there in 1874. In 1875 Fred Meyer opened a store; soon after Fred Hartman, a wagon maker, came; several years later Wm. Becker opened a harness shop; then a Post Office was acquired. It was named Woodworth to honor Mr. Woodworth of Milford who assisted in its procurement.

Then more settlers came to this area mostly from Crete, Beecher, and Eagle Lake all in Will county. They were Missouri Synod Lutherans and built a church which was later enlarged as the congregation grew. There also was an Iowa Synod Lutheran Church.

Then there was the village in the northeast part of the township, which was named Queen City (soon known as Schwer). John Schwer came from Chicago where he had been working in a store. Soon after he opened a store, a blacksmith came as well as a wagon maker and shoe maker.

The religious side of the early settlers was evident by their churches. In Ash Grove there was the Methodist Church; in the west side of the township was the society of Quakers who numbered 300. The northwest corner had a Missionary Baptist church which was moved into Cissna Park in 1891 and is now the Union Church. The St. John Lutheran (Missouri Synod) was built near the center of the township, and two miles east is the American Lutheran Church.

Ashkum Township

Ashkum Township is situated near the northwestern part of the county, with Milks Grove and Chebanse townships north of it and the Iroquois River for its eastern boundary. The Illinois Central Railroad runs across the township a little east of its center, and on the railroad property is the village bearing the name of the township.

Ashkum received its name from the Chief of the Pottawatamie Indian tribe which lived in what is now Indiana. The true meaning of Ashkum is found in the vocabulary of the Algonquin Indians. In their dialect it means "more and more."

In 1857 Mr. William M. Ross, a merchant with interests in New York and Chicago, purchased land one mile west of Ashkum station. Another early land owner in the township was Dr. Wilson, of Washington, Tazewell County, Illinois. Dr. Wilson purchased his land from Mr. George C. Tallman of New York, the original owner of the land. Mr. Tallman was responsible for much of the early drainage activities in this township and its neighbors. This drainage was needed because of the swamp characteristics of this part of Iroquois County. Dr. Wilson's family and that of Mr. Artes Yates were among the first who made permanent settlements in Ashkum Township. Mr. John Wilson and Mr. Thomas Yates, sons of Dr. Wilson and Artes Yates. Both moved to Iroquois Township and played important roles in developing that township.

As early as 1850 French from Canada began to settle in this township. Soon there were enough of these people to establish what is now L'Erable. William La Bounty is believed to be the first of the Canadians to immigrate, settling here around 1850. This settlement was given the name of L'Erable because of the great number of sugar trees planted by the early settlers. A chapel was built in L'Erable in 1854. In 1875 the present church was built. The French people who settled here were nearly all of Canadian birth and attached to the Roman Catholic Church.

Ashkum Township was organized in 1861, at which time Thomas Stump was elected the first supervisor; H. R. Cornell, clerk; and A. J. Lake, assessor.

The village of Ashkum was laid out on railroad land. Messrs. Ogden and Dufee purchased this section of land for \$20,000 from the railroad and in 1856 laid out the town. By 1867 the population of Ashkum had grown to 1,200. It had a grain warehouse, one grain mill, two sorghum mills, one hotel and eight presses. The four schools in the village had 200 pupils.

A meeting was held on January 20, 1870 to vote on incorporation of the village of Ashkum. The vote was favorable, and the first election was held on January 27th. In 1872 Ashkum incorporated under the General Act of that year.



Ashkum Bank, M. R. Meents & Sons, then later Farmers Trust & Savings. Built in 1899.



Beaver Township

In the early days of history, Beaver Township was a small unidentified area five by six miles, approximately eighty miles south of the southern tip of Lake Michigan.

As surveyors began to plat the State of Illinois, County of Iroquois, and divide this unit into townships, Beaver Township extended to the Kankakee River. When Kankakee County was formed in 1853, Iroquois County gave up the land area south of the Kankakee River to the existing Iroquois County line; however, Beaver Township was organized and Beaver Township gave up the area to provide for this new township. Since 1921, Beaver Township has held to its present boundaries.

Before the division of Beaver and Beaverville Townships, the people who settled in the northern part around St. Mary (which was later renamed Beaverville) were predominantly French. The pioneers in the Beaver area were, for the most part, Swedes, many families migrating directly from Sweden.

In the days when the area was thinly populated and before the days of the railroads, the main artery of travel between Danville and Chicago was the Hubbard Trail. This wagon trail entered Beaver Township just east of the crossing of the Milwaukee and Big Four Railroads, south of Donovan. Buckhorn Tavern was a stopover at the southeast corner of what is now Donovan. This building was of log construction and stood about fifty feet southeast of the house now occupied by the Everett Fieleke family. The Hubbard Trail followed the high ground northwest toward Beaverville and on to Momence and Chicago.

The only village in Beaver Township was founded in 1871. The land on which Donovan was built was acquired from the government in 1849 by Joseph Donovan and was given as a town site by his son, John L. Donovan, in memory of his father, Joseph Donovan. The first dwelling house built in Donovan is still in use, occupied by Mrs. Emma Carlson. William Creutz was the first baby born in Donovan in 1873.

In 1871, The Big Four Railroad was started. At first, only slow freight service was available, but later, in 1875, the depot was built and passenger and mail service were added. Some of the early freight bills record shipments of hay, ear corn, hides, and flax, along with shelled corn and oats. About 1902 the John R. Walsh Railroad was built across Beaver Township about one-half mile east of Donovan. This railroad was built especially for hauling coal and Bedford stone and was of no great benefit to the town.

The congregation known as the Church of Christ of Donovan was organized in a school house west of town in the year 1856. There were twenty-five charter members. These people continued using the school house as a place of worship until 1871, when, under the ministry of a preacher-carpenter, they erected the building at the site where the church now stands. The lumber for this building was the first material brought into Donovan over the newly completed Big Four Railroad. The congre-

gation grew and in 1908 the building was remodeled. A basement and classrooms were added to accommodate the membership of ninety-two. Today this church has a membership of about one hundred fifty members.

The Swedish Methodist Church was organized May 4, 1854. There were thirteen charter members. This small congregation met in a log building used also as a school and located in section 12. This Beaver Church was the second congregation organized in the Chicago District of the Central Swedish Conference of the Methodist Church. The First Methodist Church of Chicago was organized a year earlier. In 1860, a new church building was erected on a little knoll on the east side of the same section, and in 1863 a parsonage was built. By this time about thirty families had settled in the Beaver Community. In 1871 the church was moved to the southeast corner of section 14, a more central location. In 1880, ten acres across the road from the church was purchased and a new parsonage was built there. In time there was increased evidence of the damage the church suffered in the moving, so in 1890 a new building was constructed to replace it at the cost of \$3000. This rural church did outstanding work in the Swedish Conference and was host to both District and Annual Conferences. Its centennial birthday was celebrated in 1954. On June 12, 1964, a bolt of lightning struck and the building was completely destroyed by fire. A marker has been placed at the corner where Beaver Church served the community so well.

In 1882, John L. Donovan and his wife, Anna, gave the land for a Methodist Church in Donovan. (This church was built with great sacrifice and hard work.) The Rev. S. W. Abbott was pastor during the erection of the building. The church has been remodeled since that time and in 1962 was completely modernized. After the fire destroyed the Beaver Church building, this congregation worshipped with the Donovan congregation. On June 1, 1965 these two groups merged to become the Donovan Methodist Church. December 20, 1965, the minister moved to town to occupy the house next to the church that had been purchased and remodeled for a parsonage.

There was also a Lutheran Church many years ago in Beaver Township, but little is known of it now except the location on the east side of section 23 on land now in the Carrie Swanson farm. The Lutheran parsonage was sold and moved to Donovan where it is now used as a dwelling.

One of the worst storms Beaver Township ever experienced took place in the late Sunday afternoon on April 21, 1912. The killer tornado traveled from southwest to northeast across the township. Just before leaving the township one-half mile north of Beaver Cemetery, a complete set of buildings was destroyed. The Rice family and one farm worker were killed, seven people in all. This family was the father, mother, wife, and daughters of Edgar Sam Rice of baseball fame. These storm victims are buried in the Beaver Cemetery.

Federal authorities in 1785 dealing with the Northwest Territory

stated the territory being surveyed into townships would be six miles square and the sixteenth section of each township be reserved for schools. In the year 1818, the State of Illinois joined the Union. In compliance with this order, section sixteen of Beaver Township was reserved for school purposes and any earnings therefrom were to be used to help defray expenses of operating the schools. As time passed the land was sold with the money being loaned to local people and interest used for schools. Still later these monies were turned over to the consolidated unit school district.

Beaver Township had seven one-room one teacher schools. Independence School, organized in 1862, was located in the northwest corner of section 11. The building was made of logs, the windows were greased paper, and benches were used instead of desks. The building was also used for spelling bees, threshing meetings, and church. Mr. Oscar Kenny, the first teacher, received \$20 per month for his services.

Maple Grove's first school was made of logs. It was built by men of the district in 1862 on the north boundary of section 12. In 1865 a new schoolhouse was built twenty by twenty-four feet. The school had a two months' fall term and two months in the spring. Students from five to twenty years of age enrolled. Later a full eight month school term was begun with reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, geography and history comprising the curriculum. Money to buy equipment for the school was raised by social events, of which the box supper was the most popular.

College Corner School was located in the northeast corner of section 21. In addition to being used for school, like many other schools, the building was used for neighbor gatherings and was one of the last schools to be sold and moved away as consolidation took over. The schoolyard became farmland again.

West Union School is located in the northeast quarter of section 36. The building still stands and has been remodeled into a home and is now owned by A. Clark Duzenbery.

Salem School, located in section 24, was organized in or about 1883. Records reveal some of the early teachers: O. E. Brow, 1884; Anna Tuller, 1885; Libbie Sweet, 1886; and Mary Willard, 1887. In 1932 the Salem Reunion was started. This continued for many years and was very popular with former students and teachers who had worked together. A grove of maple trees still marks the place where Salem School served the community.

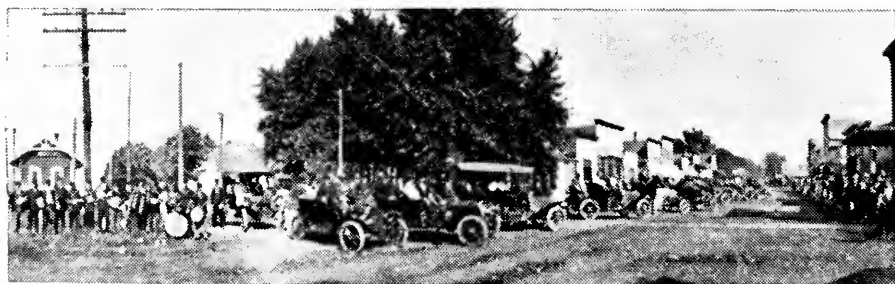
Pleasant Valley School was organized in 1862. The first teacher was Jane L. Pair who received a monthly salary of \$23. In 1881 a new building was erected on a site purchased from Mr. E. J. Barnlund, the first treasurer. This building was located on the east boundary of section 27, and served as a community center.

The first school in Donovan was begun in 1878 on land purchased from J. S. Donovan and was used until 1902 when a new four-room brick building was completed. Mr. Morrual was the first teacher and also held the first eighth grade commencement in 1903. A ninth grade was soon added and later a two-year high school was adopted.

There were other schools outside Beaver Township which some Beaver Township students attended. In the 1930's two country schools had closed due to the shortage of students. Transportation was furnished by Donovan Township High School, and students attended District 48 in the village of Donovan. In the early 40's, partly due to World War II, a teacher shortage became evident and moves were made to consolidate. In this new plan students would be taken to Donovan by buses. There was much discussion and community conversation concerning this new concept in educating young people. The new district was consolidated as District Number 262 and plans were completed to open in the fall of 1945. Grades one through six were housed in the Donovan Grade School, with the seventh and eighth grades meeting in the high school. This system continued until 1949 when further consolidation became necessary, and Beaver Township became a part of Unit District Number 3. At this point Beaver Township school history becomes a part of a new era in education. Although the District Unit high school and grade school buildings are within the boundaries of Beaver Township, the school program extends to the boundaries of Unit Number 3.

The turn of the century and the years that followed was the period of greatest growth for the village of Donovan. During this period this small country town could boast of having two banks, two grocery stores, two grain elevators, a lumber yard, two garages, a newspaper, harness shop, telephone office, tailor shop, bakery, drug store, barber shop, blacksmith shop, a hotel, a livery barn, and for a short time a movie theatre.

The heartbeat of this industrious community centered around the railroad whose depot was open twenty-four hours daily. With this artery of travel, supplies were easily accessible, and the Sears Roebuck catalogue was a household necessity. With better highways and more efficient automobiles, the old way of life began to change and these businesses began to disappear from mainstreet one by one. In the early 30's, Route 52 was built across Beaver Township bringing with it a steady change from rail traffic to auto and truck transportation. Filling stations became new businesses replacing the horse and buggy needs. This trend continued until in 1966; the old depot which was built in 1875 was dismantled and moved away. This seems to mark the end of an era which belonged to the pioneer people who founded this early community.



Main Street—Donovan, Illinois 1912



Beaver Swedish Methodist Church originally built in 1854 and destroyed by fire in 1964.



One room, one teacher school in Beaver Township

Beaverville Township

Beaverville Township, the youngest township in Iroquois County, was organized in 1921. The area to create this new township came from Papineau and Beaver Townships and consisted of thirty-nine sections in the northeast corner of Iroquois County.

The majority of the pioneer people who came to this area were French. Many families came from Canada, their families having come earlier from France.

The town of Beaverville was first called St. Mary's. When the railroads were built and mail service became commonplace across the state, it was discovered there was a town in Jasper County by the same name, so the name St. Mary's was changed to Beaverville. The post office, however, has always carried the name Beaverville. About five and one-half miles east of Beaverville there was another post office by the name of Rose. This building was located where the Nick Rheude home stands today. Every work day a man would carry the mail in a locked pouch on horseback from Beaverville to this little country post office. Across the road from Rose and about forty rods west was a blacksmith shop. This business was operated by a family by the name of Denton. This crossroads village was short-lived as people became willing to go further for more services. After a few years, about 1890, Rose was closed.

In 1921, Beaverville Township was organized and a new government was set up to accommodate this new unit. It is interesting to note the way in which this was done. The Nourie schoolhouse had been used for elections and township meetings. This school was located one mile south and one and one-half miles east of Beaverville in section 5, which was a central location before Beaver Township was divided. About the only inventory recorded, (besides money), was road equipment. At the time the boundaries were changed, there were eight road commissioners and the equipment consisted of eight road drags, eight slip scrapers, and two wheel scrapers which were listed as good. The slip scrapers were listed as fair and the road drags as poor. On a give-and-take basis this equipment was divided to the satisfaction of all concerned and Beaverville Township started their new township with four road commissioners.

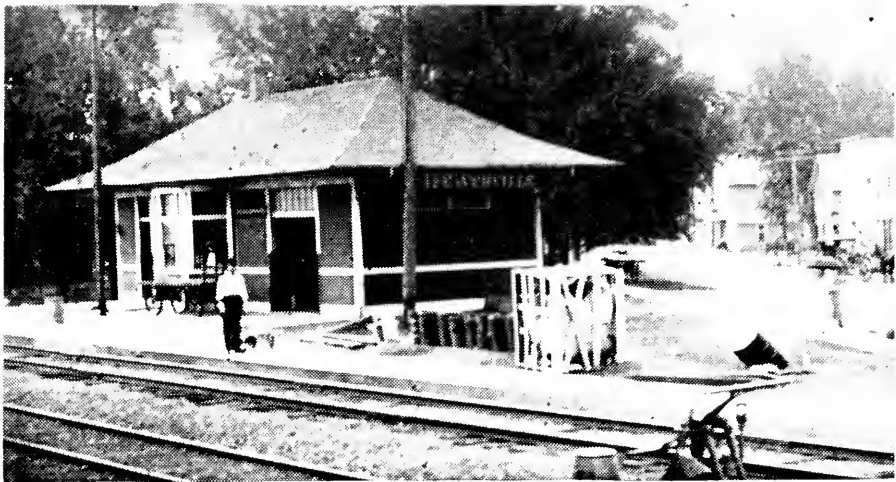
There was one grain elevator in Beaverville and one at North Hooper, located on the Walsh Railroad in section 4. In addition to a blacksmith shop and other businesses necessary to a farming community, Beaverville had a tile factory. This enterprise was started by H. L. Lambert, however, the exact time is unknown. The pit where the clay was mined is still in evidence in the northeast part of town. At one time the factory had six kilns where the clay products were dried and baked. Some of the field tile produced here were used locally. Bricks were also manufactured and some of the buildings on the west side of the main street were built with bricks from this factory. Also produced was terra cotta, a light building block used for wall partitions. It found a favorable market in Chicago.

As time passed and more modern equipment became available, however, this factory was abandoned and the operation moved to St. Anne. This business in its most productive years furnished employment for about twenty-five men.

Since the time the first settlers came to the Beaverville area, the church has been the center of society. In 1856 a plot of ground was cleared on which was to be erected the first St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church of Beaverville. Two men cut down trees and joined them together so that they could be used as uprights and sills for the new church which was made of wood and stood just south and east of the present church. The parish was organized in 1856, and Mass was offered in different homes and a country store until 1857. The present church was completed in 1911 at which time the old building was moved to a farm northwest of town. This church is one of five buildings of this particular architectural design in the United States. The roof is self-supporting and the dome is ninety-five feet above the floor, and 63 feet in diameter. The original organ, which is still a part of the church, was donated by the Rockefeller family and was valued at \$12,000. The total cost of this most unusual church building, including equipment, was in excess of \$100,000. The Bedford stone, of which the building is made, came from Indiana and was shipped over the Big Four Railroad. The huge blocks were loaded onto heavy wagons by hand-operated winches and lifted into place at the church with a horse power arrangement. Much of the labor was donated by men of the parish.

The Holy Family Academy of Beaverville was for many years a co-educational elementary school and girls' high school. The school opened in 1895 and continued until 1966 when the elementary school was discontinued and the pupils were transferred to classes in Community Unit No. 3. The high school is still in operation with students from the township and surrounding area enrolled, and also students from distant places, even outside the United States. The Provincialate and the Novitiate of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary were for many years located at Beaverville but have been transferred in recent years to Kankakee and Batavia respectively. Beaverville Township had seven one-room public schools which were discontinued at the time of consolidation.

The northeast part of the township was thinly populated. The soil is sandy and in the early days was used mostly for pasture. The higher ground was covered with trees, and the old timers referred to this area as the big woods. In the late 1850's, in section 23, the Francis Besse family operated a general store. Groceries and other supplies were hauled by wagon from Kankakee. Cord wood provided a pay load on the return trip, and the Illinois Central Railroad bought the wood for fuel. As time passed and farmers learned new methods of drainage and good soil management this sandy soil is today most productive. Three sections of this area are owned by the State and used for hunting and recreation.



Depot and Main Street in Beaverville. Note handcar in foreground. This building destroyed by fire in 1921.



Tile factory in Beaverville in 1912.



Laying cornerstone for St. Marys church in 1909.
The original church is in the background.



Completed St. Marys church in Beaverville in 1911.

Belmont Township

Belmont Township, Iroquois County, Illinois, consists of congressional Township 26 North, Range 12 West of the 2nd Principal Meridian. The area is traversed from south to north by Sugar Creek with its tributaries, Coon Creek and Jefferson Creek, entering from the east and west. The area along the creeks is timbered and the remainder is prairie. The land is gently rolling due to the intrusion of the Iroquois Moraine into the eastern part and an east-west line of sand ridges and dunes across the northern third. These are the remains of the ancient shoreline of the latter stages of glacial Lake Watseka. The soil varies from sand to sandy loam and prairie loams.

By the year 1900 Belmont Township had been settled for almost seventy years. The people came from southern Indiana and Ohio, from the middle-Atlantic states and a few from New England. They were mainly farmers and agriculture was and remains the chief industry of the township.

The city of Watseka, the county seat of Iroquois County, lies on the northern boundary, just west of center, of the township. That part of the city south of Mulberry Street being in Belmont Township. Just south and west of the center of the township lies the village of Woodland. Watseka was incorporated in 1867 and celebrated its centennial in 1967. Woodland was platted in 1876 and incorporated about 1898. Four unincorporated areas have been platted in the township since the early 1950's. They are Breezy Acres, located on the Dixie Highway, Belmont Acres, located on the Watseka-Woodland slab, Oppyville, in the northwest corner of the township, and an unnamed area a mile south of Belmont Acres. There has been a steady growth of the area of Watseka, south and east, into Belmont Township.

The Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad crosses the northeastern corner of Belmont Township and traverses the area just above the northern boundary through Watseka and west across Iroquois County. Until the late 1920's the railroad operated both passenger and freight service across the state. Now only the freight service remains. The railroad was acquired, in the late 1950's, by the Santa Fe and Pennsylvania systems and used to route freight around Chicago.

The Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad crosses the township from north to south through Watseka and Woodland. About a mile south of Woodland is Woodland Junction where the line divides. The main line swings southeast through eastern Illinois and western Indiana to Evansville. The other line swings southwest to southern Illinois and to St. Louis. By 1967 passenger service had been reduced to two trains daily on the main line and was discontinued in the middle 1950's on the southern Illinois-St. Louis route. With the coming of diesel-electric locomotives the coaling station at Coaler, located about two miles south of Watseka, was abandoned and now stands a lonely monument to progress. In the early 1960's the double-track main line was converted to single-track from Woodland Junc-

tion to Danville. The destruction of the Woodland depot by fire in the early 1900's resulted in the use of an old passenger coach as a station until the construction of a new depot about 1915.

In 1900 the roads of Belmont Township had no surfacing other than dirt. They were a quagmire of mud in wet weather and gave off clouds of dust when it was dry. With the coming of the automobile in 1910-1911 there was a demand for better roads. A gravel road was constructed from the city limits of Watseka to the County Farm. Later this road was extended as a concrete slab to the Sheldon town line. A slab was also built, east and west across the township, through Woodland and from the Body Cemetery north to Watseka at Second Street. Later a slab was extended south from a point west of the Body Cemetery to Bryce.

The State of Illinois embarked on an ambitious network of state highways in 1918. The first of these, the Dixie Highway or Illinois Route 1, was completed, north and south through the township, in 1921. The construction of U.S. 24, first known as Illinois Route 8 or the Cornbelt Route, was completed along the northern boundary of the township in 1924. In the early 1950's the Dixie Highway was widened, a new bridge built over Coon Creek, several sharp curves were eliminated and the grade raised.

In other highway improvements the early slabs were widened to accommodate 2-lane traffic. In 1965 a new bridge was built over Sugar Creek at Woodland. This structure replaced one built in the early 1900's which was the first steel-reinforced concrete bridge built in the United States. By 1967 all roads in the township had been surfaced with gravel, black-top, or concrete except for a short stretch north and east of the Belmont Cemetery and a few little-used strips along the east and west town lines.

Belmont Township, in 1900, contained six one-room rural schools. They were Oak Ridge, New Athens, Point Pleasant, New Victor, New Salem, and Longshore. There were also elementary schools at Watseka and Woodland as well as a high school at Watseka. In 1946, Oak Ridge, New Athens, Point Pleasant and parts of New Victor and Longshore united with the Woodland Elementary School to form the Woodland Community Consolidated Grade School district. The remainders of New Victor and Longshore and New Salem were added to the Watseka Elementary School.

The Watseka High School was in operation in 1900 as a part of the Watseka Elementary School. In 1906 a new building was erected on South Third Street and the old building razed. This new building housed both the elementary and the high schools. The Watseka Community High School district was organized in 1920. An addition for the use of the high school was made in 1916 and in 1936 a gymnasium and several classrooms for the high school were added. A new high school building was constructed in 1949 on Belmont Avenue. To this building an addition was made in 1961. Blake Field was given to the high school in 1937.

In 1956 a wing of classrooms and an office area were added to the Watseka Elementary School building. The name "South Side School" was given to this building complex as the district also operated a school in the north part of Watseka. The 1906 building and the 1916 addition were razed in 1966 and a new wing of classrooms and a playroom were constructed. Also another elementary building, the Wanda Kendall School, was constructed east of the high school the same year.

In 1901 a new school building was erected in Woodland. Two years of high school were added to the elementary school and later increased to three years. In 1943 the high school was discontinued. A gymnasium was added to the building in 1936 and a lunchroom and several classrooms in 1956. The 1901 building was razed in 1966 and new classrooms and a new gymnasium added to give the community a modern elementary school building.

Woodland had two churches in 1900, Christian and Methodist. The Belmont Methodist Church was located in the country about four miles northeast of Woodland. There were, at that time, no churches in the part of Watseka included in Belmont Township.

The Woodland Christian Church disbanded about 1914 and was later used for a short period by the Nazarenes. It was then converted to a chicken raising operation and was finally burned in the early 1940's. The Methodist Church in Woodland is unique in that it was built in conjunction with the Odd Fellows Lodge. The lodge still occupies the upper floor of the building. A community room was added to the church in 1937. For many years the same minister served both the Woodland and Belmont Methodist churches until the latter burned in 1946. The Woodland minister now serves the Methodist Church at Crescent City.

About 1951 St. Paulinus Episcopal Church was established in Watseka. Services were held in a house at the corner of South Sixth Street and Lincoln Avenue for a number of years. In 1961 a church was constructed on the County Farm Road. The Society of Friends had occupied a church on South Second Street near the old Court House. In 1953 they built a new church on South Third Street. The organization disbanded in 1966 and the building was purchased by the newly organized Centennial Christian Church. In 1964 the Faith Lutheran Church, American Synod, was built on Lincoln Avenue.

In 1900 the Iroquois County court house and jail were located just outside the northern boundary of Belmont Township. Proceeds from a gift of land to the county were used in 1964 to construct a new court house and jail on a site just inside Belmont Township at the eastern edge of Watseka.

Other public improvements were the construction of a new building, in 1917, at the Iroquois County Farm to provide living quarters for the superintendent and the inmates. This was the third building constructed for such a purpose as the second building burned in 1915. The original building, erected in 1866, was razed in 1967. In 1946 a cemetery asso-

ciation of the cemeteries in Belmont and Middleport Townships was organized. This organization, by a tax levy, provided for the care of all cemeteries in both townships. A fire protection district that covered the south two-thirds of the township was organized at Woodland in 1950. The Iroquois Hospital was built in Watseka from proceeds of a gift in 1914. In 1951 an addition was made to the original building and in 1958 a residence home was constructed. At present another addition to the hospital is being planned. Improvements at Woodland include a new post office built in 1961 and a new village building erected in 1962.

The Legion Park in Watseka had its beginnings as Fowler's Park in the early 1920's. A swimming pool and a dance pavilion were constructed and furnished recreation for the area for a number of years. The pool was closed in the 1930's but the pavilion operated as a skating rink until it burned in the early 1940's. In 1955 the American Legion Post of Watseka acquired the Fowler property and with other land established one of the finest parks in this area.

Electricity came to Belmont Township at Watseka in 1891 and to Woodland in the early 1900's through local power plants in each community. In 1914 the Watseka plant was taken over by the Central Illinois Public Service Company and about 1920 the same company brought service to Woodland. The rural area received electricity through the Rural Electrification Association in the late 1930's.

One of the oldest industries in Belmont Township was the Woodland Clay Company. In the early days the prairies of the township were swampy and tile was needed for drainage. The company at Woodland supplied much of the tile used for this purpose. In the 1920's it began the manufacture of clay building block but the decreasing need for tile and the coming of concrete building block brought about the closing of the factory in 1934. A sawmill, operated by the same family since early days, is in operation in the Woodland area. At Watseka a fertilizer applicator equipment company is engaged in manufacturing at Oppyville and an electronic components company is located on West Mulberry Street.

Agriculture was and still is the chief industry of Belmont Township. Since 1900 farming has moved from four-legged horse-power to horse-power on wheels. The more or less self-contained farm which produced its own meat, milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables is gone. The farmer now buys these from the supermarket. From being satisfied with a corn yield of thirty-five bushels per acre they now grumble if it falls below one hundred. From stable manure to commercial fertilizer, from the dinner bell to intercoms on the tractors and from oats to soybeans the changes have been steady and immense. Farming is now specialized in such areas as grain production, livestock feeding, dairying and broiler or egg production. Today the production of grain is the chief type of farming in Belmont Township. With specialization and mechanization the size of farms have increased while rural population has dropped. The former hired-man now lives in town and works in a factory. The isolated farm

house of the past is gone and the modern farm home stands in its place. Thanks to the automobile, good roads, the telephone, TV and modern schools the farmer lives as we'l and is as well educated as his city cousin.

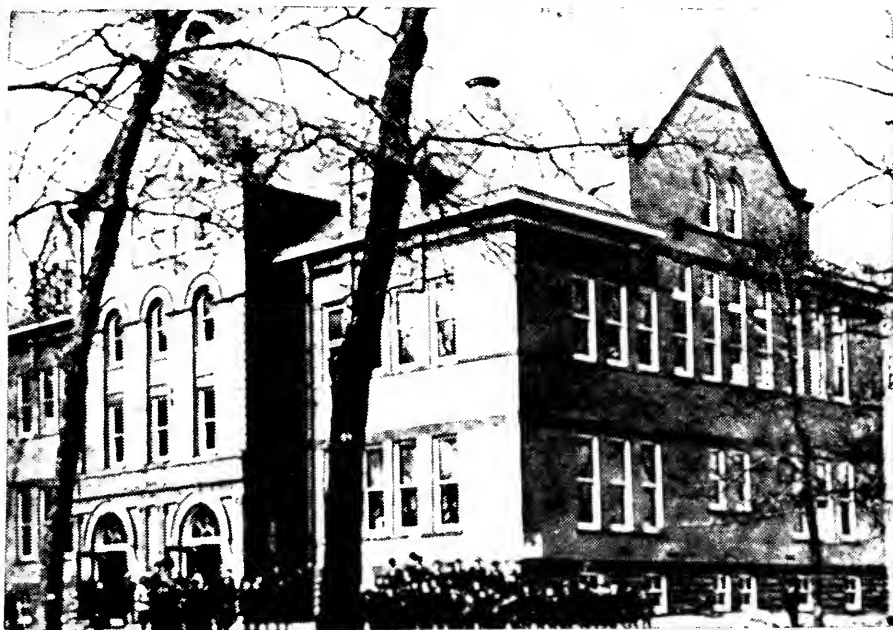
Such has been the history of Belmont Township since 1900. He who reads can see the tremendous progress made in the past seventy years. We cannot foretell the future but with such a past the future cannot be but good.



Woodland Bank in 1910, Woodland, Illinois



Main Street in Woodland around 1900 looking north to south.



Old South Side High School in Watseka, Illinois, 1908.

Chebanse Township

Chebanse occupies a position on the northern border of Iroquois County, with Kankakee County to the north of it. The Iroquois River on the eastern boundary, Ashkum Township to the south, and Milk's Grove Township to the west, complete the Chebanse boundaries. The Illinois Central Railroad runs very nearly through the center of the township from north to south. Chebanse, sixty-four miles from Chicago, and Clifton, sixty-nine miles from Chicago, are both on this mainline of this most important railroad.

Langham Creek, early known as "White Woman's Creek," winds through the township from west to east. Early settlers were drawn to this land area by reports of the richness of the land and the obvious beauty of the landscape thereabouts.

Chebanse Township, a political township, is composed of portions of a number of congressional townships. The area includes the northern one-third of town 28, range 14, the northern third of all that is west of the river in range 13 west of the second principal meridian, and sections 6 and 7 of the fractional township, range 11 east of the third principal meridian, four sections of town 29, range 11, and the southern two-thirds of town 29, range 14, and is west of the river in the southern two-thirds of range 13, making in all some sixty-two sections of land. The rolling land which extends west almost to the Illinois River in Township 29 begin in Chebanse Township.

Long before railroads were built in this area much of the township was already under construction. The old "Butterfield Trail," which was the highway of travel from all the country around the upper Sangamon, the Okaw, the Embarrass and the Big Grove passed through here. This latter was the route followed by the Illinois Central Railroad. Little is known about the settlers along this route or how it received its name, but it is known that this was one of the greatest hog and cattle routes in Illinois. This route commenced immediately after the Black Hawk War of 1832. The Funks and others, who ranged all over central Illinois, buying all the cattle and hogs that could be bought, started driving the stock to Chicago instead of Galena, the early market in extreme north-western Illinois. This change in traffic traversed through Chebanse Township.

In 1843, B. F. Brady, and his two brothers, Joseph and William, came from Attica, Indiana, to settle in sections 33 and 34 near the mouth of Langham Creek. Purchasing this land from the state, the Brady brothers built a log cabin on section 33 and, while living there, engaged in raising cattle and hogs which they drove to Chicago to be sold. B. F. Brady was one of the first justices of the peace in this part of the county, and was elected to the second board of supervisors.

In 1954 Adolph Poncelot, the Belgian consul in Chicago, purchased some land from William Farmer, an early settler. Mr. Poncelot put a Mr.

Harbaville on the land he bought and began an attempt to get some of his countrymen to settle in this area. He was successful and a number of Belgian families came to the township in 1856. Ancestors of these people still reside in the township as well as Ashkum. These early settlers were Catholics and with the French of similar faith, founded the first Roman Catholic neighborhood in this county. Father Chiniquy came and began services in the home of Mr. LaBounty.

The names of many of the towns along the Illinois Central Railroad have Indian origins. Chebanse and Ashkum were not known in the Indian history of Iroquois County. Mr. R. B. Mason, the chief Engineer at the time the Illinois Central was built, authorized the use of these names. They probably originated in the Indian history of the eastern part of the United States.

The township of Chebanse was organized in 1856. Jesse Brown was elected the first supervisor. The village of Chebanse was laid out by the railroad company in the center of the northeast quarter of section 14, in 1854. Harrington and Spaulding were the first merchants in Chebanse. They built a store on the east side of the track in 1854, which was burned in 1858. Amos M. Fishburn built the next store on the same side of the tracks.

Chebanse was incorporated as a town in 1868. In the election later in the same year village officials were elected for the first time. The trustees elected were S. A. Robinson, H. Huckins, Robert Nation, R. S. Laughlin. In 1874 an election was held to reorganize the town under a village system, and by a close vote this change was made.

Milk's addition to Chebanse was laid out in 1868 and was located across the county line in Kankakee county.

Clifton is the other village in Chebanse township located about five miles southwest of Chebanse. The first settlers were principally from New England. In the summer of 1855 W. B. Young, L. A. White, J. C. and C. D. Howe came from Worcester, Massachusetts.

Mr. William Viets came to the area in 1857. A businessman from Chicago, he believed this area was a good place for a town. He took the name Clifton for the town from the name of the hotel in which he stayed, the Clifton House. He got title to the land and had it laid out in 1858.

An election was held June 17, 1867, in which it was approved to incorporate the town. The first trustees elected were C. O. Howe, S. B. Walton, L. J. Millsbaugh, A. B. Cummings and F. Cozeau.

These early settlers from New England brought their religions and denominational preferences with them. A Congregational Church was started as early as 1859. In the same year the Methodists also organized themselves. The Roman Catholics began services in 1862 at L'Erable in the home of the resident priest, James McGovern. Their first Church was built in 1867.



Peter Madsen house in Clifton, built in 1857.



First depot in Clifton, built in 1860.



Clifton House, Nels P. Jensen, proprietor at that time.



North on Main Street in Clifton, Illinois in the early 1900's.

Concord Township

Concord Township formerly included Sheldon Township. The latter was separated and placed under township organization in 1868. Concord Township was surveyed by the United States Government in 1822, except range ten, which was surveyed in 1834. Although it had its definite boundary lines and was a definite political unit, it remained under the commission form of government until the year 1856.

Concord Township, although one of the first in the state to change its form of government, was not organized under township organization until the year 1856. For this purpose a meeting was held in April of that year by the resident voters.

The settlement of Concord Township during the succeeding period of a quarter century was not rapid. Chicago was the nearest market for the surplus products available. Pack horses or ox teams were the only transportation. No roads, no bridges, but swamps and sloughs and rivers, which were impassable except during the dry season.

To furnish education, public schools were established in the township in the year of 1835. The first public school was started and "kept" in a log cabin on the hill on the north side of the river in a settlement then known as Bunkum. The statement has been handed down by the old settlers that the first two schoolmasters to preside in this primitive seat of learning were Hugh Mewell and Benjamin Scott. The latter was also the first school treasurer and the second sheriff of the county. In 1840 the first school house was built in Concord Township.

It is claimed that Rev. S. R. Beggs was the first to preach in Concord Township in the year 1832. In 1833 the first Methodist Church was established. The first pastor assigned to this circuit was Rev. Essex who held a series of meetings in the home of Benjamin Fry. This society grew from the smallest beginning, Benjamin Fry himself being one of its active members from the first. It met regularly at the Liberty School House, and finally in 1872 erected a church just east of the township line and named it Movies Chapel.

In 1850 a United Brethren society was formed in the Enslem school house south of the river. The second Methodist society, organized in 1854 in the township, held meetings in the school house in Iroquois. This society in 1875 erected a church edifice in the village of Iroquois. In 1870, Samuel Warrick and William Brown were the promoters in the building of the church named Prairie Dell near the west line of the township.

The third period of the history of the township begins about 1855. A number of causes have contributed to the transformation of the new county and its industrial development during this period. Grist mills sprang up and were in operation. One was located at Old Texas, near the southwest corner of the township. The railroads as a factor in building up Concord Township cannot be overestimated, and the C. C. C. and St. L. (Big Four) was completed in 1871.

The present village of Iroquois was plotted by Henry Moore, June 7, 1836, as the town of Concord, but was not incorporated until thirty-nine years later. It originally contained fifty-two blocks, eleven streets running north and south and five streets running east and west.

Montgomery, which was laid out a year earlier, lies just south of the river and was first in point of settlement and prominence. It was also built up on both sides of the Hubbard trail. The original village of Iroquois was surveyed about the same time as Montgomery.

The first county records were kept at the house of Isaac Courtright three-fourths of a mile south of the village, the farm owned by R. F. Karr. The first commissioners court was held in a private house located in the village owned by a William Armstrong. The town was named after the proprietor, Richard Montgomery. The first tavern in Montgomery was kept by Timothy Locy in 1831. David Meigs, Richard Montgomery, and John White followed as proprietors of the public inn. The first white settlers to locate within the town were Benjamin Fry, George Courtright, Richard Courtright, John White, the widow McCulloch, and sons, William and Solomon, and many others who were more or less closely associated with the very early events of the twin villages of Montgomery and Concord.

This group of towns at the beginning of their history were derisively called Bunkum. The name in time grew so popular that they were not generally known by their correct names. The town, Bunkum, has a well authenticated origin. It originated from an incident in the Congress of



Winter scene of farmstead in Concord Township.

1819-21. A member from North Carolina delivered a lengthy oration on the Missouri question, in the course of which he very plainly told those who still remained listening that he was only talking for "Bunkum."

The government, however, never recognized the name and the post office continued under the name of Concord. In 1875, when the town of Concord was incorporated, the village was officially named Iroquois. The government followed the precedent and changed the name of the post office to Iroquois.

The first election held in the county was held in Montgomery in 1833. The first white child born in the township was William L. Eastburn in 1834. The marriage of George Courtright to Agnus Newcomb is believed to have been the first to take place in the county. The license was obtained at Danville, and the ceremony was performed at the house of Isaac Courtright, where the county records were kept.



Crescent Township

Crescent Township occupies the most central portion in Iroquois County. It was originally entirely prairie land with a slight rolling topography.

As far as records show John Johnson appears to have been the first to make a home here. He arrived in 1846 and lived in this township until his death eleven years later. In 1848 Joseph Myers bought the east half of Section 1 from Mr. Thomas A. Norvell of Gilman. Other early settlers were Moses Tullis, George W. Lovett, Nathan Harrison, Edward Hitchcock and the Hutchinson family, Jacob, Isaiah, Daniel and John. The first settler in the northwestern part of the township was Benjamin Wright who arrived in 1849. Robert Clark and James Lewis settled in the extreme western part of the township between 1852 and 1854.

In the summer of 1853 a Mr. Hoover moved into the southeastern corner of the township. In the next two years Henry and Jedediah Cobb and William Cunningham and his sons-in-law, Harvey Roll and Russell Search claimed land in this part of the township also. This land was controlled by persons out of Danville but after some legal activity these settlers gained the land. Settlement was slowed up by the panic of 1857, however. In 1865 people of German origin began to migrate to this township and greatly influenced its development.

Crescent remained a part of Belmont Township until April, 1869 when it became separated and was named Grenard. This name was the name of the first supervisor, E. Grenard. Two years later the name was changed to Crescent, because the name of the station was Crescent City. The first township officials were the aforementioned E. Grenard as supervisor, David John, clerk; H. C. Boughton, assessor; Edward Hitchcock, collector, and C. M. Potts and A. J. Harwood, justices of the peace.

As Iroquois County became settled between Watseka and Gilman the railroad authorities saw the need for grain handling facilities to be improved in this area. In 1866 the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw Railroad built a switch and a station on the farm of Hiram Dunn, which is now Crescent City.

Mr. Dunn was instrumental in getting a post office established here and Mr. Riggles was appointed Postmaster. Mr. Dunn called the town Crescent for the idea of the circular shape of the timber, which skirted Spring Creek and the Iroquois River, in its curved stretch from section six in Crescent Township to section six in Belmont Township.

About 1868 people of German stock began to come into this area. Most of these people were engaged in farming. During the year of 1868, Mr. J. D. Young opened a store in Crescent City and Samuel Crumpton induced the railroad company to locate a switch and establish a station there.

Crescent City was platted in 1869. Frederick March followed J. D. Young in locating a business establishment there. A. J. Harwood built

the first residence in this town and the first school was built in 1870. Also in 1870 a hotel building was moved into town by a Mr. Short and was later operated by J. B. Mounts. Later J. B. Grice built the hotel known as the Union House and operated it until 1879 when it was converted into a private residence. Mr. S. G. Staples built an elevator in 1869 and ran it for some time.

There are four religious denominations related to the growth of the Crescent Community. The First Congregational Church was organized in 1869 by Reverend Joseph E. Roy. The Methodist congregation dates back to 1865 when a class was formed by Reverend Thorp. The services of the Roman Catholics began in 1869 on the arrival of Mr. J. D. Young. In 1870, Father Fanning of Gilman was appointed to the Crescent City parish and regular services were conducted.

As the result of the German migration into the Crescent area the St. Peter's Lutheran Church was established in 1887. Their church was built in Iroquois Township in the northern part of Crescent City. A large number of Crescent Township residents also helped to organize and become members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Woodworth in 1873.



Main Street in Crescent City, Illinois about 1910.

Danforth Township

During its early political existence, Danforth Township was a part of Douglas Township. This township is the form of a parallelogram, four miles wide by thirteen miles long.

About 1852, A. H. Danforth and George W. Danforth, of Washington, Illinois, in Tazewell County formed a partnership to buy land in part of Iroquois County. Between 1854 and 1860 they purchased from the government and the Illinois Central Railroad nearly 50,000 acres of land. George Danforth came to this part of the county during this time and devoted his time to improving and selling the land. Much of the land purchased by the Danforths was quite swampy and had to be drained to increase its value. The closeness of various rivers and creeks made such drainage quite practical.

Besides draining the land, the Danforths induced a number of people to migrate from Holland to settle here. It is this action that accounts for the Dutch influence in this township. For example, John Huizenga, a native of Holland, was attracted to this area while he was working on the Illinois Central Railroad near here in 1853.

Returning to this township after the Civil War, Huizenga, along with a Mr. Heersema, purchased farmland here. After farming some time, John Huizenga opened what was probably the first store in the township.

Practically all of the new residents were members of the Dutch Reformed Church. This denomination held services as early as 1869 in Danforth and built their first church in 1872. St. John's Lutheran Church began holding religious services in 1870 and built their original place of worship in 1873.

In 1877, the residents of the northern part of Douglas Township requested a separate township organization. In that same year, a division was approved by the Board of Supervisors as to the area of the two townships, Douglas and Danforth.

The first election of Danforth Township officers was held in 1878. The following were elected: David Brunlack, supervisor; H. R. Danforth, clerk; L. A. Benjamin, assessor; and Fred Kohl, collector.

The firm of A. H. Danforth and Company had been dissolved in 1873, and H. R. Danforth had arrived to represent the interest of his father and his own. This firm had much more success in managing its land holdings than did many similar companies and played an instrumental role in the development of this township.

The village of Danforth was laid out in 1872, on section 18 and the corner of section 17, which lay between that and the railroad. The switch and station had already been established in 1865.

Douglas Township

Douglas Township was named for Senator Stephen Douglas. It lies in the western part of the center of Iroquois County, originally embracing twice as much territory as it does now. It was divided in 1878 with the Illinois Central Railroad dividing it exactly in the center and the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw railroad dividing it almost in the center from east to west. Spring Creek runs across the southeastern corner of the township.

The surface of the land of Douglas Township is generally level and early in its history suffered greatly in the rainy years, but since drainage the land is a rich black soil and raises an abundance of corn and all kinds of small grains and beans and hay.

There were very few early settlers in this township; however, a Jacob O'Feather settled near Spring Creek in 1836. He had a fair education and was believed to be the first school teacher in the lower Spring Creek Settlement. He was also the first Douglas Township resident.

Douglas Township had three towns: Gilman the largest, LaHogue, and Leonard (which has only a few houses left now).

We have no exact dates for the village of Leonard. According to Anna Hallam Howard (now 85 years old), she remembers when there were a large general store owned by Herman Minhardt, a depot (flag stop for T.P. & W. passenger trains), post office, school and telephone office. She estimates the date from the 1850's to the early 1900's. These landmarks vanished and were later replaced with an elevator, which burned down, and now on the same spot stands a fertilizer plant. Leonard is in the eastern part of the township.

LaHogue is in the western part of the township on the TP & W railroad, and again there are no exact dates but information was obtained from Mrs. Winifred Meyers (79 years of age) whose father was the first doctor of that village. Dr. Lockwood came there in 1881. The village got its name from two men who brought in their hay press to harvest the wild hay, a Mr. Laney and Hogue. The first resident was John Zea, who was also the first ticket agent. In 1921 LaHogue had a hotel, bank, school, two large grain elevators operated by Zea from the start, three grocery stores, post office, and church, but with the coming of the highway one mile south, nine houses were moved, and soon the other businesses disappeared, leaving at present only one store which also houses the post office and a few well kept homes.

Gilman, the largest town in Douglas Township, is located at the junction of the IC & TP&W Railroad. In 1847, Gilman's first resident, Matthew Lynch, a railroad contractor and engineer came to live in what was called the railroad or section house. By 1855 the Illinois Central was running trains from Chicago to Del Rey and in 1857 the Peoria Oquawka (eastern extension) was opened from the west to this point and a combined passenger and freight house was erected. The first passenger train over the road was made up here and ran west to Peoria to the state fair,

the last of September. Wm. B. Fleager came here also in 1857 as the first station agent. That same year D. L. Parker became the first postmaster. The first car of lumber and first residence was built by William P. Gardner also in 1857, and later he built a two-story furniture and school supply store. A large part of what is Gilman in 1967 was once underwater overgrown with bullrushes, cattails, and overrun with beavers and muskrats. After much work and drainage, Gilman was a reality.

In the year of 1858, three citizens and three Methodist ministers donated half of their various holdings in land to the company of Cruger, Secor, and Gilman, if in consideration they would run their railroad to this point and make a town here. They had the right to name the town which was named after one of the members of the company, Mr. Gilman. This railroad was known in later years as the Springfield division of the IC Railroad. Those giving the land were E. E. Hundley, John Chamberlain, Joseph Thomas, and pastors Walter C. Palmer, John Dempster, and Joseph Hatwell.

The original town plat contained 77 blocks all north of the Peoria Railroad. In 1866 Mosher and Dent purchased a tract of land south of the Peoria Railroad and started improving it to make Gilman a thriving town. Later there was the Mann addition. In April of 1867 the first board of trustees was elected—Geo. Patter, E. S. McCaughey, Albert Dickerson, Ellias Wenger, and Hiram Baker. In 1874 Gilman was incorporated; Thomas Spalding the first mayor. The first hotel was the Gilman House which burned down as did the next three hotels that followed.

Many of the Gilman business places were destroyed by fire over the years due to lack of fire equipment. First came the hand-pulled and horse-pulled carts, then the fire engines, but as late as 1915 there was still a fire tower and bell to be hand rung on the lot back of the present Star office, a far call from Gilman's equipment of today. On July 5, 1883, a whole block of large store buildings and offices were completely destroyed by fire and never rebuilt.

The first religious services were held in the new IC station and passenger room by a Rev. Osborn sent out from Chicago by the Illinois Central to conduct the meeting. The first church of Gilman was the Catholic Church built in 1858, destroyed by fire in 1878, but replaced by a much larger one. The first Protestant Church was the Presbyterian organized in 1858. They held their meetings in various places until their first church was built in 1866; the Lutheran followed in 1867.

In 1866 Al Peck and his father ran the Hay press, probably Gilman's first. That same year this area (which was referred to as the Grand Prairie of Illinois) was hit by a big frost in August which killed everything in the fields.

In 1865 there were just thirty-one buildings in all, but by 1965 Gilman had twice that number of business buildings and many times that number residents.

The Journal was Gilman's first newspaper, published by Matthews

Custer in 1868, but it lasted two years. Then on May 21, 1870, the Gilman Star was born, a weekly paper which is still in operation ninety-seven years later.

Gilman had increased in population until in 1870 there were 767; in 1920 the population was 1443; in 1925, 1700. In 97 years the population has only increased a little over a thousand. Two big boons to Gilman were the flowing wells in 1868 with a public fountain erected and electricity in 1898. The water was probably the biggest of the two. Gilman's first doctor, it is thought, was Dr. Wenger who came here in 1865. Some other early doctors were Dr. Brook, Dr. Dodge, Dr. Van Valkenberg, Dr. Snyder and Dr. Miller.

Gilman in 1920 had two highways—the Egyptian Trail and the Corn Belt—both cement paved. There were six Protestant and one Catholic Church and a new \$100,000 High School, a very modern up-to-date hospital, a new high-powered fire truck, a good library with thousands of books, two building and loan companies, two good banks, a model creamery and ice plant, many blocks of paved streets, many first class business houses, and a beautiful comfortable depot. The years have brought many changes: Gilman now in 1967 has three highways, 24, 45, and 54 running through the south edge of the business district with a new super highway being built about a mile from town. Today there are four Protestant Churches and one Catholic Church, seven taverns or saloons, but now the taverns are twice as many as the churches. The hospital has not been in operation for at least twenty-five or thirty years, and the building was sold to Hitchings and Gelmers and houses Dr. Buckner's office and two upstairs apartments. The first truck has been replaced with newer equipment. There are now two fire trucks, an inhalator, and all modern fire fighting equipment. One of the banks closed its doors and went into receivership, so Gilman has only one bank and one Building and Loan Association. It is still a big little town and one of the best small business towns around.

The first club was the Dorcas Society started in 1859. Since the early 1900's many, many clubs of and lodges have come and gone, but many such as the Masons, Oddfellows, Woodmen, Legions, Commercial Club, Rotary and the Woman Auxiliaries have prospered.

One of Gilman's big prides is her Old Boys' and Girls' reunions held every five years since March 21, 1886. Six high school boys met at that time and decided to meet again each five years. These reunions bring old timers from every point in the United States. At one time there were so many Gilmanites in Chicago and Kankakee that they would charter two railroad cars to bring them back home, but, like every thing else, the autos have taken over, and the passenger trains are becoming a thing of the past. The original signers are all gone, and although it is a big event with parades, floats, and carnivals and probably will always be a celebration, Gilman misses the old time zip and all night dances, hayrides, and celebrations of the Oldtimers.



The Old Community Hospital in Gilman.



High School at Gilman before 1911.



Looking north on Central Street in Gilman.



Depot and hotel with freight house and water tower in Gilman.

Fountain Creek Township

Fountain Creek Township is the center of the southern tier of townships in Iroquois County and is bordered on the south by Vermilion County. Lovejoy is on the east, Ash Grove township on the north and Pigeon Grove on the west.

The town of Fountain Creek was created following a petition signed by twenty or more legal voters of the town of Ash Grove. The County board of Supervisors heard the petition. After legal posting of notice including legal description of the area to be included, all preambles, the resolution was adopted by the board on Tuesday, September 15, 1868.

These pioneers used every effort to establish schools, churches, government, and improved roads. One by one churches were established, moved, and united. The present United Brethren Church of Claytonville, was dedicated December 21, 1912; the new Apostolic Christian Church was dedicated October 23, 1949; Goodwine Methodist Church, the oldest one in the area, was dedicated in 1872 and has been added to and improved over the years.

Earliest history mentioned numerous one-room schools—Burden School, Judy School, Carey School, Leemon School, Rudd, Fountain Creek, and Goodwine School which was established in 1884 and continued in use until 1960 when its closing made Iroquois County one of the first in Illinois to abandon all one-room schools. The school districts have all been absorbed into consolidated districts outside the township.

The first post office, established by the United States Postal Department on November 23, 1874, in the home of Jehu Judy, was given the name Seemly. The mail was brought by post rider from Wellington. The old post office records kept by Mr. Judy show it was closed at the end of the first quarter, March 31, 1883, following completion of the railroad branch. Post offices were established in Goodwine and Claytonville with mail coming in by train.

The building of the Wellington to Cissna Park branch of the C & E I railroad opened transportation in 1882 and was a great asset for shipment of agricultural products to market. Then in 1903 when the Woodland to St. Louis line was opened from north to south, additional transportation facilities were provided.

The greatest resources of this township are agricultural products. There is excellent farmland, fine dairy and beef herds, hogs and sheep. Grain farming has developed over the years, and with it the establishment of elevators and grain companies to meet the needs of grain farming.

At present there are three elevators in operation—Fountain Creek, Claytonville, and Goodwine. This last named grain company is the oldest Farmers' Elevator in the state of Illinois that has been in continuous operation since it was organized and incorporated in 1889.

The once-swamp prairie land has been tilled by the owners and drainage districts established. The general slope of the land is toward the

north, with very little timber except a small belt along the streams. The stream from which the township derived its name was once called Bussing Creek, but one of the earliest settlers not liking the name changed it to Fountain Creek, and since it has remained.

William Goodwine, for whom the village of Goodwine was named, owned at one time around one thousand acres of land in the area. He was active in organizing the township government and served in some offices in it.

William Clayton, for whom the village of Claytonville was named, owned many acres of land as well as an elevator in Claytonville.



Depot and grain elevator in Goodwine, Illinois in 1900. This is the oldest Farmer's Elevator in Illinois that has been in continuous use.



General store in Claytonville, Illinois. This building was destroyed by fire in 1920.



The Goodwine Methodist Church erected in 1882.

Iroquois Township

Iroquois township is in the central portion of the county and includes an entire congressional township. The Iroquois River runs across its northwestern part; Spring Creek passes across its western half from near its southwestern corner in a northeasterly direction to its junction with the Iroquois. So large a portion of the township was originally timber that all requirements for early settlement were found here. The surface is gently rolling, and the eastern half of the township is decidedly sandy.

The earliest inhabitants migrated mainly from Ohio and Indiana, but later many came from counties north and west of Iroquois County. John Flesher and Levi Thompson seem to have been the first residents of this township. Among other early residents were John Wilson, John Johnson, Maurice Kirby, Alfred Fletcher, and L. D. Northrup. Northrup in 1836 laid out the town of Point Pleasant, located on the east side of Spring Creek about eighty rods from the Iroquois River.

The next settlement made in point of time, and the first in point of prospective importance, was Plato. A group known as the Plato company purchased land along the Iroquois River and prepared a platting of land for a town that was quite attractive. Plato was described to the prospective land buyers in the East as quite a metropolis. According to them, Plato was at the bend of navigation on the Iroquois River with many steamboats trying to find room to dock at its wharves. The plat for Plato was to the south and west of the river. It was the expectation of the proprietors to secure the location of the county seat here, and it was advertised in New York and Boston as "one of the handsomest locations



Maple Grove School in Iroquois Township in 1916.

for a city in the world," and it might well have been just that. Lots were sold at prices higher than lots sold in Chicago. Notes given for the lots were to become due upon completion of the steam mill that was planned. Largely because of the financial crisis in the nation in 1837, Plato lost their bid for the county seat, and with this the dreams of grandeur for Plato.

The east side of the river was settled from about 1839 by Samuel Lyman, Thomas Yates and his father, Artes, Alexander Sward, James M. Moore, the last of whom settled here in 1850.

An interesting chapter in the history of Iroquois Township is that of the war between Dixon's Ferry and another ferry a short distance down stream from it. Mr. John Wilson, who owned land leading to the second ferry crossing, won the first legal battle over the issue, but this did not solve the issue. Both ferries later continued to operate in competition with each other. Beckwith's history concludes that Dixon's Ferry was captured and recaptured almost as many times as Harper's Ferry of pre-Civil War fame.

The only railroad in the township is the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw, which was built in 1858 and 1859, and runs along the southern boundary line of the township.

The northern part of the village of Crescent City is in Iroquois Township, but this village was discussed in the chapter on Crescent Township.



Bargain store in Plato, Iroquois Township which was destroyed by fire in 1910.



Ferry boat crossing at Plato in Iroquois Township.



Loda Township

Loda Township is located in the southwest corner of Iroquois county, bounded on the southwest by Ford county, on the north by Artesia township, and on the east by Pigeon Grove township. It has good land, gently rolling, easy tilling; however, few farms were brought into cultivation until the Illinois Central railroad gave a market for products.

The first permanent settlement, so far as can be found, was in 1843. In 1844 there was a disastrous rainy season during which crops could neither be planted nor cultivated. The first settler was forced to fight cholera, hunt wolves which killed his livestock, and tolerate the devastating rains which seemed to recur every seventh year. At this time the nearest mills were in Covington, Indiana, and at Myersville, Vermilion county. The nearest market for eggs and chickens was in Chicago.

Loda Township was organized in 1856 and the population in 1875 was about 2,000. Loda Township's first school was in 1849. It was held in one of the rooms of the first settler's home with about ten pupils attending. Later a school was held in a small cabin nearby. Education has progressed a great deal since 1879 when school was held for seven and one-quarter months and a female teacher was paid twenty-nine dollars a month. For many years the grade and high school students were housed in a two-story brick building which has since been torn down. Loda High School consolidated with Buckley High in 1952. In 1964 Loda and Buckley consolidated their grade schools in the Loda High School building for the benefit of both schools.

The town of Loda was laid out by the Associated Land Company, composed of those people who had interests in the railroad. It is not known who was responsible for naming the place Loda. There was immediate confusion with a place in Kane county called Lodi. Some person of authority, noting this confusion, upon his return to Washington, had the name of Loda's post office changed to Oakalla. He supposed the name of the town would follow suit, but habit was strong. As young as this place was, people never got over calling it Loda.

In 1855 there were only three houses, the depot, the freight house and the section house. In this year, also, as soon as a building could be put up, a real estate business was opened. Also in 1855 another man, Adam Smith, one of great energy, business capacity, and unbounded expectations came and purchased 16,000 acres of the railroad land. He put men to work building, farming, and developing the country. He built one of the largest houses in the country, which still stands in Loda and is still considered one of the finest homes around. He spent thousands of dollars on an extravagantly large mill; put up an extensive building for a hay-press, built a hotel, stores and other buildings on a somewhat smaller scale. He also put up on his farm a barn capable of stalling 1,000 head of cattle.

The Loda distillery was built in 1858 and 1859 by a group of English-

men. While it was operating, business was good. Employing about 100 men, this was one of the largest distilleries in the state at that time. It had eighteen fermenting tubs and a capacity for running 1800 bushels of grain per day, making about seventy-five barrels of high wines per day and feeding 1200 head of cattle and 2000 hogs in the summer. It required four or five government officials in attendance when it was in full operation. The death of nearly all the people interested in it finally stopped its operation, and shortly after it was burned to the ground. The ground where it stood is now in cultivation.

Loda, which had reached a peak before 1875, began to decline in population soon after the destruction of the distillery. At this time the building of new railroads which crossed each other at Hoopston deprived Loda of the trade of a large region of country. The building of the Gilman and Springfield Railroad cut off a portion of trade in that direction. A number of Loda business men found locations elsewhere and many of the houses were empty. What happened to the houses in Loda that once were lived in by more than 1000 persons? The people in the country who were making new farms found it cheaper to go to Loda and buy a house rather than to build one, and many of these were hauled out to the surrounding farms.

The first paper published in Loda or in the southern part of Iroquois county, was started in 1856. Known as the *Garden State*, it was an independent six-column paper devoted to local interests, literature, and home affairs. The *Loda Independent*, published in 1866, continued for only one year. The "News" was published for two years starting in 1872. The "Register" was begun in 1875, and the "Times" in 1879. Publishing the "Loda Times" for 93 years has been the Stevens Printing Co. in Paxton.

A meeting of citizens was held in June of 1863 to vote on whether or not to incorporate the village. The meeting voted in the affirmative for incorporation. Five trustees were elected and one was chosen president. The boundaries of the town were fixed to include all of the original town of Loda and all the additions which had been platted. In September 1873 the town voted to accept the general act for the government of villages, passed in 1872.

One of the first religious organizations in Loda was the Baptist church which was started in February of 1857. The original church was built in 1864. A preliminary meeting of people desiring a Congregational church was also held in 1857. The church was built in 1859 and 1860. It had quite a library of 500 volumes and furnished five prairie schools with libraries. This church was remodeled and rededicated in both 1893 and 1904. The building, sold to a Lutheran group in 1951, is known today as Immanuel Lutheran Church.

The first Methodist meetings were also held in the year 1857. The first organization was in 1859, and the church built in 1864-1865. The Roman Catholic Church was gathered here about 1870 and a church built in 1874.

Loda has its own public library. This memorial library which was dedicated in 1897 is kept up by an endowment fund and run by a board of trustees.

The only business of any size in Loda today is the Loda Poultry Co. This business has been operating in Loda for over 85 years. It first transported chickens and eggs to live markets, grew larger and processed poultry for many years and now is a distributing plant.

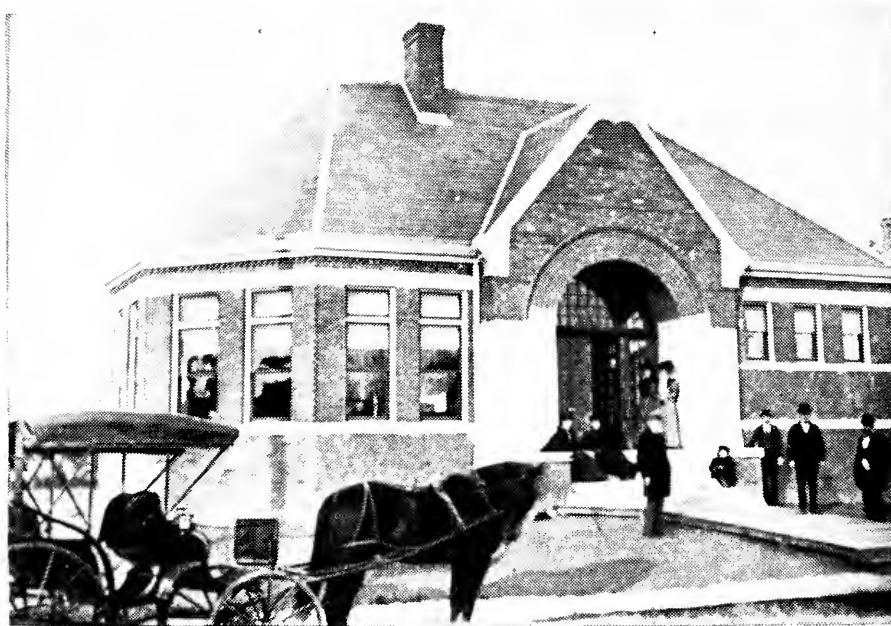
The newest development in Loda Township is Bayles Lake. It is a private man-made lake located one mile west of Loda. The lake itself is about two miles long and has nine miles of shoreline. The lake filled early in the spring of 1953 and has grown so much that it is really a community in itself.



Railroad depot in Loda, Illinois.



The old and new schools in Loda, Illinois.



Library in Loda, Illinois.

Lovejoy Township

Lovejoy Township was first settled in the northern part of the township. The first building erected in the township was the "Red Pump," located on the Hubbard Trail or Chicago Road at the north edge of the township. A well was dug at this location, and a log pump inserted which was painted red. The well never failing to provide water, was much in demand whenever it was possible to drive teams and herds of cattle to Chicago. A tavern called "The Red Pump" was operated there in the early days, getting its name from the well pump. The township was sparsely settled in these early days.

Lovejoy Township was formerly a part of Milford Township lying directly to the south of that township and was bounded on the south by the county line of Iroquois and Vermilion counties. Lovejoy Township was established by a vote of its people at the first election held in April 1868. The petition for separation was signed by thirty voters and presented to the 1868 February term of the Board of Supervisors and was granted by that body.

At the first town meeting the people passed a resolution providing for a survey of all the lands in the township. The expenses of the survey were defrayed by a tax of so much per acre. On July 3, 1868 an election was held for the purpose of deciding whether financial aid would be given to the Chicago, Danville and Vincennes Railroad in the amount of \$3,000.00. The vote was 23 for and 3 against. Lovejoy Township, in addition to this amount, had assumed \$60,007.12 of the railroad indebtedness of Milford Township, which had been voted before the division of Milford Township. The people at first were quite enthusiastic about giving aid to the railroad company, but as time passed, their interest waned and there was considerable effort made to avoid payment of this indebtedness. However, good transportation was desperately needed for the movement of farm products to market, and the building of the railroad in 1871 had much to do with the settlement and growth of the area.

Prior to 1872, there was a small settlement of the town of Wellington approximately one-quarter mile east of the present downtown area of the village. After the railroad was constructed in 1871, Wellington, the only town in Lovejoy Township, was laid out in 1872 near the center of Section 14 with the business area being built adjacent to the railroad. In order to secure switches and a depot for the new town, J. L. Hamilton and R. T. Race each donated 40 acres of land to the Railroad Company. As a result of the location of the railroad and the laying out of the town, many businesses began to operate in order to supply the needs of the village area. Among them, in the early days, were grain elevators, a livestock yard, general merchandise stores, a drug store, hardware and implements business, lumber yard, harness shop, blacksmith shop, undertaker, livery stable, hotel, draying and many other businesses and serv-

ices. Streets were laid out, houses built, local governmental units established and the village and township were well on the way to becoming a flourishing community.

For example, the principal business in Wellington in 1878-79 was the buying and shipping of grain. It was estimated that in 1879 21,000 bushels of flax seed was shipped as well as 375,000 bushels of corn.

In 1878 a church building was erected by the Methodists in what was then known as the southeast part of town, and cost \$1500. First services conducted in this building occurred after Christmas in the year 1878. In 1904 the Methodists constructed their present church building on East Main Street. Prior to 1900, the Presbyterians had a large church on East Main Street, located on the land which is now a part of the village park. Both churches thrived in the early part of this century, but eventually the congregation of the Presbyterian Church declined to such an extent that it was disbanded in approximately 1928.

John Greer, a prominent land owner in Prairie Green and Lovejoy Townships, upon his death on January 2, 1891, provided through his will that a bequest be made to Lovejoy Township. He directed that a town hall be erected for the sum of \$2,000 and that an additional sum of \$2,000 be given to the township with the income from this amount to be used for the maintenance of the building. In 1894 the town hall was built, a brick building 66' x 22' containing an auditorium and stage. For many years officials of the village and township have used it as their headquarters and as a polling place. It was used extensively for the first twenty-five or thirty years for many events such as school plays, social activities, for the community, and for traveling shows of various kinds. But as newer, modern school buildings were constructed, many of the community's activities were transferred to the larger building. A Fire Protection District, composed of Lovejoy and Prairie Green Townships was organized in 1954, and a new Fire Department Building was constructed in 1955. Since then, the polling place for Lovejoy Township has been located in this new building and meetings of the township and village have been transferred from the old Town Hall to the newer building. The cash bequest left for the maintenance of the town hall is still intact and invested, but the town hall has long ceased to be the center of the community activities.

After the first settlers of the land arrived in this area, it became necessary to provide schools for the children. Usually, every four sections of land comprised a school district which supported a one-room school house.

In the village of Wellington a large, square, frame school building was erected, probably around the year 1881, which served until 1930. The old building had two school rooms on each of two floors, and at the time seemed more than adequate. There are many in the community who attended school in this building, and no doubt, remember it as being a larger building than it actually was. In 1930 the School Board, composed

of Alta Lockhart, Van Benbow, and Perry Parrish, supervised the construction of a new brick building with gymnasium which still serves as headquarters for the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.

A high school building was erected in 1915 with a basement gymnasium and served the community well for many years. Interest in basketball was high during the 20's and 30's, and some very fine teams represented Wellington in area competition. In 1941 a very large and modern gymnasium was built as an addition to the original building.

In the late 30's and early 40's much discussion was held in regard to the discontinuance of the one-room school buildings. This consolidation was accomplished, and bus transportation of pupils to a central point became necessary. In 1947, consolidation of schools became popular and the territory of Prairie Green and Lovejoy Townships banded together into a one-unit school district. The one-room school houses soon disappeared, and a new grade school building was erected at Greer in Prairie Green Township. This building now accommodates the first and second grades for the entire school district.

Prior to 1920, the township roads were taken care of through the help of farmers who worked in their spare time with teams, wagons, and scoops. The township itself also used graders with steam engines to pull these machines. In the 20's rock was shipped in by railroad car, and those persons owning teams and gravel wagons were paid to unload the cars and transport the material to various roads. In 1936 a sizeable bond issue was passed, and for the first time every farmer had access to an improved gravel road to market.

In 1919 the Dixie Highway was constructed and a hard road was built to connect Wellington with the new highway. This road to town embraced the full length of Main Street to the east edge of town. In constructing this road, a cement mixer, propelled by steam power, was used. In order to provide water for this steam operation and for the cement mixing, a pipe was laid along side of the road to a nearby creek. A narrow gauge railroad track was built from the town to the road building site, and material was hauled for road building by small freight cars.

About 1881 a railroad spur from the main line was constructed from a point about one and three-fourths miles north of town in a westerly direction to serve the towns of Alonzo, Hickman, Goodwine, Claytonville, and Cissna Park. A train accommodating both passengers and freight made two round trips a day from Cissna Park. This train did a considerable amount of switching at all points along the way and served a useful purpose for many years. Many high school students living along this new line rode the train to attend high school at Wellington.

A large hotel in Wellington operated until 1920. It had twenty-five rooms and catered to salesmen and others who came to town on business. These early-day salesmen, in order to cover territory not served by rail-

roads, hired teams and buggies from the livery stable to make their selling trips to nearby towns.

The village had street lights in the early days, using first kerosene lamps; later gas lights were used, and finally in 1920 electricity became available to everyone.

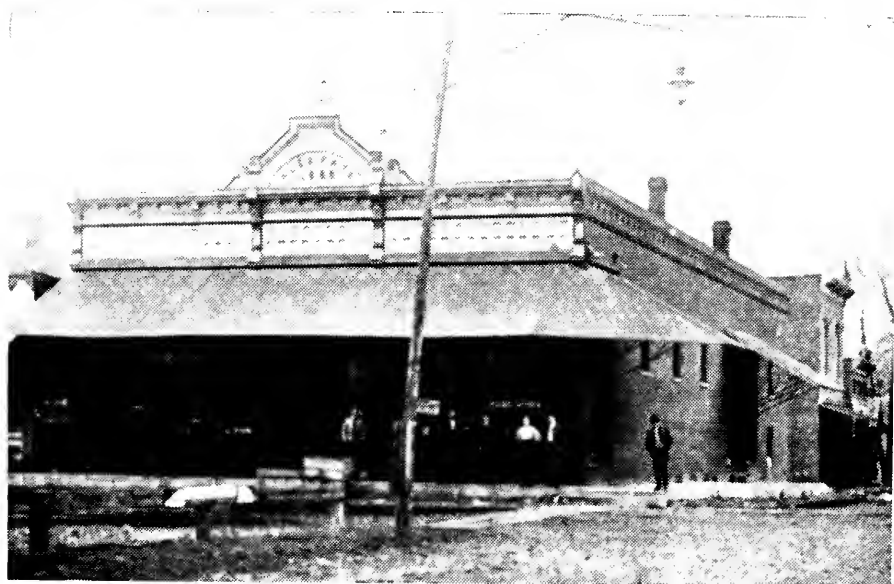
Lovejoy Township as a township will be eligible to observe its 100th Anniversary in April of 1968.



Steam powered threshing outfit in 1895 from Lovejoy Township.



Main Street in Wellington, Illinois looking east in 1913.



Post Office and General Store on the north side of Main Street in Wellington, Illinois taken in 1919.

Martinton

This township occupies a position in the center of the northeast quarter of Iroquois County. Papineau is on its northern boundary, Beaver to the east, Middleport and Iroquois townships on its southern boundary, the Iroquois River, its western boundary. The C & EI railroad runs by the northeastern corner of the township.

The soil is chiefly the fertile sandy loam, common along the Iroquois River. Originally nearly one-third of its surface was covered by timber. Along its western border the timbers were quite thick and was used for building fences and houses, as well as supplying fuel.

The first settlers to put up homes in the township are believed to have been those who came to Bean's Grove, along the eastern side of the township, between 1833 and 1840. Aaron Rush is believed to have been the first settler and probably arrived around 1833. Mr. Rush moved to Wisconsin forty years later. Other very early settlers were a Mr. Cottrell, Benjamin King, and James Williams.

In 1836 E. M. Hammond settled in this township. He was joined by a Mr. Gillespie and John Merrily shortly thereafter.

Thomas Yates, known in Illinois as an important cattle raiser, was one of the first settlers in the western part of Martinton Township. He and his father later sold out their interests in Martinton and moved their interests across the Iroquois River to what is now Iroquois Township.

In the years before the railroad, the old stage route from Bourbonnais to Middleport traveled this township. Located on Beaver Creek was the nearest post-office, called the Democrat Post Office, which dated back to Congressman John Wentworth, the long-time editor of the *Chicago Democrat*. The first post office built in this township came in 1871 after the railroad was brought to the township.

Porter Martin, from whom the township received its name, arrived in the area at about the same time the railroad was completed. Porter Martin's family was originally from the state of Vermont.

Mr. Martin had four sons—James, John, Warren, and Barney—and two daughters—Mrs. Stearns and Mrs. Burnham. James Martin began a mercantile business with a Mr. Beckert at Old Martinton in 1856. Martin and Beckett sold their store to other interests, and after a further series of transactions, this store became the property of J. W. Stearns and Co. This company moved the store to New Martinton when it was laid out along the railroad.

A Mr. Carrean built a blacksmith shop in New Martinton. Mr. A. O. Edison, a cousin of Thomas A. Edison, settled in New Martinton and opened up a wagon shop, but later A. O. Edison followed the trade of carpentry and home-building.

Other early settlers were mostly from Indiana and Ohio, but a few came in later from other eastern states besides Vermont. Later in the

nineteenth century French-Canadians from the settlements in Ashkum and Papineau became residents in the township.

At the September meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Iroquois County in 1857, the present town of Martinton was set off and named Buchanan, after James Buchanan, the President of the United States. The first town meeting was held at the Martin and Beckert store; in 1858 Thomas Maggee was elected the first supervisor of the township. Two years later the name was changed to Martinton.

The village of Martinton was laid out when the railroad was built on the land of Adam Wamba. Following the custom, Mr. Wamba conveyed the land to the railroad so a depot could be established there. Later the railroad company conveyed the land to John L. Donovan, who platted the town, and through whom the titles of lots were received. J. W. Stearnes was the first to start a mercantile business here, bringing his stock from Old Martinton in the spring of 1872. Thomas Maggee Jr. commenced buying for the Simon & Runyan Company during the winter of 1872.

Dr. Collins, Dr. Tascher, and Dr. B. L. Evans were the first three physicians in Martinton. Henry G. Stearnes was the first postmaster, succeeded by Victor Peltier in 1875.

The village was incorporated in 1875. On September 24th of this year the county court ordered an election to be held in the village as a result of a petition requesting that it be duly presented. The election was held on October 23, 1875. Isaac Pilotte, Peter Garmache, Barney Martin, Samuel Lottinville, Levi Case, and A. Belgrade were elected trustees. Pilotte was elected president of this growing body, V. Peltier the clerk, and A. Belgrade the police magistrate.



Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad depot with elevator in background.



Perry Bridge over Iroquois River in Martinton Township. It is a 300-foot span.



Main Street of Martinton, Illinois looking west.



Looking northwest on the Main Street of Martinton, Illinois in 1912



Middleport Township

At the turn of the Century Middleport Township had a population of 2,955, with Watseka, accounting for 2,148. There were many fine homes and farmsteads but no paved roads and no paved streets. The C. & E. I. Railroad crossed the township north and south with some trains stopping at Pittwood as well as at Watseka. Crossing the township east and west, the T. P. & W. Railroad ran passenger trains each way three times daily.

In 1900 Pittwood had two stores, a barber shop, a doctor, two churches, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a lumber yard, a drug store combined with a real estate office, a butcher shop, a grist mill, an elevator, a school and a railroad station.

Watsaka was a thriving community with fifty or more business houses, two newspapers, two banks, five doctors, four dentists, two grade schools in Middleport (one grade school and a high school in Belmont) and at least ten attorneys at law. There were four hotels and several boarding houses. Freight was hauled from the railroad station by horse drawn drays and deliveries of food to homes were made by horse drawn delivery wagons.

The first movie theater was a "Nickelodeon," located on the south side of Walnut Street between the C. & E. I. Railroad and Second Street. Movies became a very popular means of entertainment and for many years Watseka had at least two at one time and sometimes three.

The Iroquois County Fair Grounds at the east end of Locust Street between Mulberry Street and the T. P. & W. Railroad was the scene of an excellent county fair for many years, as well as for the high school football games, the county high school track meets, and all of the circuses that came to the community. Ringling Brothers, Wallace and Hagenback, Barnum and Bailey, Sells-Floto, and Buffalo Bill included Watseka on their summer itineraries.

The principal industry of the township in 1900 was farming. This was a difficult occupation as the farmers used horse drawn single row plows and walking, single row cultivators, also spring tooth rakes for hay side delivery rakes came within a few years as well as riding cultivators. Timothy, the primary hay crop, was used to feed horses. Other crops were corn and oats with an occasional field of rye. Wheat was grown in 1918 for the first time in any quantity. Meatless, wheatless, sugarless days were widely accepted by the population during World War I, and the farmer was encouraged to expand his production as well as include wheat in his crop plan.

Limestone was introduced into the township by the first farm advisor, Mr. Lewis W. Wise, who came to the county in 1912. Use of phosphate and sweet corn as soil builders followed soon after limestone. Two-row cultivators which came in the 1920's were considered a great help. The steam-powered threshers were introduced before 1900 and used until combines were widely accepted in the 1940's.

It was a great day for the farmer and every member of his family when the thrashing machine, manned by three men, came down the lane. The machine men had to be fed three meals a day, with lunches in between and were usually given a night's lodging.

Considerable livestock was raised on each farm. Disease was prevalent among farm animals, as well as humans. Home remedies were used but sometimes not too effective. The first veterinarian, Dr. Stringer, came to the township in 1905, and was soon the busiest man around. He was followed in 1910 by Dr. Carl Yoder. Dr. J. V. Oltman, Dr. Scanton, and Dr. R. M. Hampton followed. Dr. Oltman practiced here until his death in 1950, and Dr. Hampton retired in 1962. Dr. Winkler was here from 1952 to 1962, and Dr. A. J. Day came in 1961.

The corn was picked or "shucked" by hand. Once again the housewife had a big job as extra men were hired and given room and board as well as so much a bushel for picking (usually three cents in 1900, six cents by 1930).

Haying also meant extra keep. Usually the neighbors came with their hayracks and sometimes, an extra mowing machine or two. Bailing hay by machine became general about the same time as machines were used for other farm jobs. All of the machines followed the acceptance of the tractor as a necessity.

Tractors and motorized trucks of all sizes came on the scene in the 1930's and revolutionized the whole farming system. Larger plows, larger cultivators, a whole new method of harvesting—the combine and corn picker—made it possible for one man to farm more acres than in the past. This trend has continued down to the present.

A large creamery, the Watseka Dairy Products Company came to the township in 1935, using the Volberding Ice Cream Company plant on Ash Street in Watseka. This Company bought whole milk from farmers. When the business was expanded and other plants operated in this section of Illinois and Indiana, the name was changed to the Crystal Dairy Products Company. A spice factory, The Crystal Food Products Company was started on the same premises on Ash Street in 1959.

In 1928, a shirt factory, The Walton Duplex Company was built along the north side of the T. P. & W. tracks east of Eighth Street, but this company did not stay long. The building was leased to Western Condenser in 1939. That Company was consolidated with T. R. W. and in 1967, employs 300 people from many parts of the county and is of great economic value.

Uarco, Inc. came to Watseka in 1951 and built a plant on the north side of the T. P. & W. tracks at the west city limits, almost on the banks of Sugar Creek. It is a progressive and constantly growing plant, employing 650 people in 1967. It is a great asset to all of Middleport as well as to the surrounding townships.

The American Telephone and Telegraph (A. T. & T.) Company built a large Repeater station on the Cemetery Road in Middleport in

1926, with an addition in 1928. Operations such as this one have grown more important through the years with the rapid advances in communications, radio, and television. It affects the daily lives of all in many ways.

The Iroquois County Farm Bureau was organized in the Old Court House in Middleport Township in November, 1913. The Iroquois County Home Bureau was organized in 1928. The name was changed to Homemakers Extension. These two groups sponsor 4-H Clubs; Middleport has 4 Home Economics 4-H clubs and 2 agriculture 4-H Clubs in 1967. The first clubs in the county were organized by high school Home Economics teachers in 1926.

The public schools were constantly improved over the years. Middleport had a school at Pittwood, West Watseka, and the North Side grade school in Watseka in addition to eight one room schools. Today, all of the rural districts have been consolidated into a Middleport school at Pittwood, West Watseka, and District #69 which has three buildings now.

The only private school in the township is the Welles School for Retarded Children. This school was started in March, 1953 by Miss Nona West, county nurse. Seven families with retarded children met and organized the Iroquois Association for Retarded Children. By October, twelve children were registered and the school was opened in one room at the Lutheran school at Woodworth. By 1955, the Welles trustees became interested, and the school was moved to the old Welles school property on East Cherry Street west of the Presbyterian Church. Since no funds from taxation were available at this time, the school was supported by parents and voluntary contribution. Children from all over the county were enrolled, and the parents furnished transportation. After seven years, the Welles property was sold and a new building constructed on the Cemetery road at the northeast edge of Watseka by the Welles trustees.

In 1962 a sheltered Workshop was opened in the building on Cherry Street. A substantial donation in 1964 from the Sophia Steinhilber estate made possible the construction of a new building adjacent to the Welles school for the workshop. The workshop program is for young adults sixteen or over who are not employable on their own. Work is solicited from local industries or businesses, and the young people paid for their work. The workshop requires close supervision.

In 1967, 33 children from age five through the workshop age are attending Welles School. Some state funds are available today, with about 50% of the required budget coming from taxes and 50% from donations. This school is operated by a board of 9 members elected by the association.

The Watseka Public Library on the corner of Cherry and Fourth Streets was built in 1903 and ready for occupancy in 1904. Mr. George H. Miller, a Bloomington architect, designed the building. The contract was let for \$12,050 and \$2000 was allowed for fixtures and furniture. The second floor auditorium was to be for the use of Watseka Women's Club

and other organizations. In 1967 the Library contains 15,000 volumes and has approximately 2000 borrowers, with an annual circulation of 18,500.

In the fall of 1907 all of the churches got together and built a huge, rough board "Tabernacle" on the west side of Third Street between Cherry and Locust. The seats were rough boards set on tile and the only heat, a pot-bellied coal stove, in the front. The platform had a piano, a pulpit, and room for a choir. Music was an important part of the service and was led by a professional musician who was hired with the evangelist. "The Old Time Religion" was belted out each evening to be heard for blocks away. Many people confessed their sins and joined some church during these meetings—some to remain faithful and others to "slip back to their sinful card playing, dancing, and gambling." The churches active in 1900 were Methodist, Catholic, Christian, Presbyterian and Friends. Congregations were formed later by Episcopalians, Missouri Synod Lutheran, American Lutheran, Baptist and Church of Christ. Seven Day Adventists met at the home of Mr. David Johnson, the barber, in the early years. There were two churches at Pittwood, Christian and Seven Day Adventists. The latter church was discontinued many years ago, as it was in Watseka.

The first concrete or paved road crossed Middleport in 1915 when a narrow road was built west of Watseka. Illinois State Route 1 was paved



Stanley house built in 1867 at the corner of Fifth and Cherry Streets in Watseka. Dismantled in 1966.

in 1920 and U. S. Route 24 was paved in 1921. From this time until today the roads of Middleport Township have been constantly improved until there is a good network of farm-to-market roads over the whole area.



Watsaka Main Street in 1876. Looking northeast from Courthouse at Second and Cherry Streets.



Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad crossing Chicago and Eastern Illinois tracks in Watseka. Old railroad tower on right.

Depot and Iroquois Hotel
Watkins, Ill.



Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot with Iroquois Hotel in background taken in 1914.



Milford Township

The settlement of Milford began in 1830 along Sugar Creek, the area taking its name from a ford by a mill on this stream. At the time of this settlement it formed a part of Vermilion County and was the only settlement, except Bunkum, now Iroquois, between North Fork and Chicago. Milford is situated in the southeastern part of Iroquois County, bounded on the north by Belmont, east by Stockland, south by Lovejoy, and on the west by Ash Grove townships.

The earliest settlement in Milford of which any account can be obtained was made in the timber on the banks of Sugar Creek. Early in the year of 1830, Samuel Rush, Robert Hill, and Elisha Miles emigrated from Indiana and settled upon land in the northern part of the Township. Mr. Rush claimed that he was the first white settler, and it is said that he was here in the fall of 1829. Mr. Rush drove his team of oxen hitched to a covered wagon to a place near Sugar Creek. He removed the cover from his wagon and used it as a cover on his first house. As soon as he could, he built a three-sided house of logs with the roof and floor of bark; a fire was kept burning in front of the open side. This house was on the Rush homestead where Donald Theesfield now lives.

The only road in the country was what was known as the Hubbard Trail, between Danville and the lake shore by the way of Bunkum. Mr. Hubbard, who lived in Danville, had a trading post in Bunkum. As there was no regularly laid out road, the route he followed was named after him.

The first Post Office in Milford, named Driftwood, was established at the house of Levi Thompson, about the year 1833. Thompson was postmaster. The mail was usually carried on horseback, the carrier stopping at Thompson's house over night. Previous to this time, letters were brought from LaFayette, Indiana, or Danville by any person who might by chance come to Milford. Asa Thomas built the first house in the



township south of Sugar Creek. The first marriage ceremony performed was that of Elizah Sapp and Miss Ally Thomas, daughter of Asa Thomas. Sapp was obliged to walk to Danville, a distance of thirty-five miles for the license.

The first adult person who died was Mrs. Singleton who was fatally burned by falling into the fireplace in her home. Her grave was prepared by first laying poles on the bottom and sides, then putting her body in and covering it in the same manner.

March 3, 1874, the village of Milford was incorporated. July 1, 1874, the Milford post office was made a mail order office. The postmaster at this time was James Woodworth, father of Frank Woodworth. March 3, 1874, Citizens State Bank was organized by A. M. and E. S. Jones, twin brothers, and their sister Priscilla Jones.

The first township election was held in the year of 1856. Fifty-one votes were cast. Elected were Supervisor, Town Clerk, Assessor, Collector, Overseer of the Poor, and Road Commissioner. September 5, 1859, the people voted to levy a tax of 1% to pay for a new school. The building contract was let at a cost of \$320.00. It was to be 18' x 24', of good material throughout, to be painted, and to include ten seats and a teacher's desk. The new school was finished in March, 1860. The teacher's salary was eighteen dollars per month.

In 1876, Donovan and Venum Bank was called First National Bank, with Horace Russell, cashier. This building was located where Milford Township building is now situated. The Milford Building Loan Asso-



Meat market in Milford, Illinois taken in 1898.

ciation was founded in 1883. Warren Davis spent seventy years in Citizens State Bank and Milford Building Loan.

Edward L'Hote bought the *Herald News* in 1878; Warren Hartberg now owns and has operated this paper since 1931.

In February, 1932, the Nazarene Church was organized; the Baptist Church was organized in 1961.

In 1960, a census of Milford Township was taken. The population was 2240, of which the population of the village of Milford was 1699. The timbered areas and prairie have changed somewhat from the days of the first settlement. Today the country side is a thriving agricultural region. Milford is very proud of their industries and the new Citizens State Bank building, Decker Sales Commission Co., Ritenour Concrete Products, Reeves Brothers Construction Co., Howard Industries, and Jessie Machine Shop.



Milks Grove Township

Milks Grove is the northwestern township in Iroquois County. It is bounded on the north by Kankakee County, on the east by Chebanse, on the south by Ashkum, and on the west by Ford County. Originally this township was named "Hickory Grove" due to a well-developed grove of hickory trees of about 300 acres in the center of this area. The name of Milks Grove was given to the township because of the influence Mr. Lemuel Milk had in its development.

Colonel William Howard of New York came to this area sometime in the late 1840's. Colonel Howard's occupation was that of a drover, buying cattle and driving them to market. Consequently, he never lived in the township but did own land in it. Mr. Rutledge H. Enos came to the township as Mr. Howard's representative. The area was known as Enos' Grove as a result of this man's living there.

In 1850 Colonel Howard proposed that Mr. Milk buy out the Colonel's interest in the Grove. Mr. Milk bought half interest and Colonel Howard gave the remaining half of land to his son. With the death of Col. Howard in 1853 Milk bought the interest from the Colonel's son.

Actually Lemuel Milk came to the area bearing his name in 1851. He developed extensive land holdings in the area, but primarily he was interested in raising first sheep, and later cattle. He developed quite a cattle-feeding operation over the approximately fifty farms he owned. Ranging in size from 80 acres to a section, these farms were not all in this township.

The township grew in population until some years after the Civil War. The first settler was Mr. R. H. Enos who had managed the Grove Farm for Col. Howard and later for Mr. Milk. The township was first organized in 1872. The first township officers were R. C. Munger, supervisor; B. W. Gilborne, clerk; Samuel Walker, assessor; and C. W. Summer, collector.

The early history of Milks Grove Township is so much a part of the life of Lemuel Milk that a few more facts about him seem to be pertinent. Mr. Milk was a farmer, stock raiser, and merchant. By steadily increasing his land ownership, he possessed 9,000 acres at one time. He owned land in Kankakee County as well as other property in Kankakee, Wilmington, Manteno, and Chicago and approximately 12,000 acres in Indiana.



Onarga Township

When the first settlers came to what is now Onarga Township, they were attracted by Spring and Shave Tail Creeks whose banks were surrounded by timber and good land. The first white man to enter the area was Gordon S. Hubbard, a fur trader. The first white settler was Jesse Amos who came from Sugar Creek and stayed with the Indians during the summer and fall of 1833. In May, 1834, the second settler, John Miller, made his claim and built a shelter for his wife and four children.

Ira Lindsey, Jonas Smith and son, James, and J. B. Grice left West Virginia in 1834 and came to Illinois, accompanied by Abram Lehigh, who had emigrated from New York to West Virginia, to Ohio and to Indiana. Frederick A. Lehigh, born August 14, 1835, was the first white child born on Spring Creek.

The nearest mill at this time was thirty miles away, the only market eighty-five miles, and the closest doctor twenty miles away. Jonas Smith was the first county surveyor. The first election in Spring Creek was held in the home of James Smith in the fall of 1835. Judges appointed by the county court were Levi Thompson, Ira Lindsey, and John Johnson.

Ira Lindsey, one of these judges, was the first to build a brick house in 1834 and also a large barn. He was also the justice of the peace.

Other early settlers included James Martin who worked for Lindsey and Ayers. Samuel Mason Ayers arrived in 1834. In the spring of 1835, Col. James Frame settled in the area and operated a hand mill for grinding corn. In the fall of 1835, Jonathan Wright arrived; the first wedding on Spring Creek was that of his daughter, Louisa, who married Jacob A. Whiteman of Bunkum. Several families settled in Spring Creek in 1836 including the Thomas Pangborns, the Caleb Jewetts, Oliver Millers, Alexander Harpers, and the Reuben Skeels.

Thomas A. Norvell was keeper of the first hotel in Onarga. The first blacksmith was John Shipley. The first business opened in Del Rey in 1853 was by Frank Walker; Gardner and Pecks operated the first general store. In 1854 the first United States post office opened in Del Rey with an annual net income of \$1.57. The Onarga post office opened in 1855 with an annual net income of \$16.99.

After the Illinois Central Railroad from Kankakee to Spring Creek (a distance of thirty-one miles) was opened December 2, 1853, many families migrated to the area.

During the early days nothing but surface wells were dug. These became dry during the summer months. Much of the sickness among the settlers and loss of livestock was blamed on these dry wells. In 1854 Thomas Lindsey bored in the bottom of two wells. The railroad well at Onarga hit a vein at one hundred feet. Samuel Harper, two miles east of Onarga, struck a stream at eighty-five feet which was the first flowing well in the county. It was estimated there were over 2,000 flowing wells in the county at one time, most of them in the Onarga area.

At the time the Illinois Central Railroad reached Onarga in the fall of 1853, there were only two or three houses and a freight-passenger depot. A few pioneers lived on the banks of Spring Creek, but there was not a house on the prairie west of the station for twenty miles. W. P. Pierson occupied the first building in 1853; James Watts built a house which he sold to Nelson Skeels in 1853; and the railroad built a boarding house in 1853. When Pierson first arrived, he used the freight house as an office, and in 1853 started the first business selling lumber, furniture, hardware, farm implements, and household articles. (In the crash of 1857, Pierson's was the only business along the railroad that did not fail.)

Onarga was laid out in 1854 by David A. Neal, vice president of the railroad. It is on a high ridge, twenty-three feet above Gilman at the north and the creek bed three and one-half miles south. At a general election in November, 1855, the township system of local government was adopted with Onarga, one of the eleven townships created. It was twelve and three-fourths miles east and west by ten miles north and south. In 1861 two tiers of sections were taken from Loda on the south and a five and one-half miles strip from the north. In 1879 an additional strip, four and one-half miles wide from north to south, was taken to create Ridgeland Township. The present area is approximately eight and one-half miles east and west and six and one-half miles north and south.

On April 1, 1856, at the first township election, eighty-eight votes were cast electing Ray W. Andrews, supervisor; Dr. A. N. Crawford, town clerk; Dr. Lemuel Boyd, assessor; Nelson Skeels, collector; and Thomas A. Norvell, Jacob Riner, and Daniel Wright, commissioners of highways.

Dr. A. N. Crawford settled in the area in 1854, later selling to Dr. John L. Parmalee. A lumber yard opened in 1856, and a banking business started in 1867.

An election on February 9, 1863, resulted in the incorporation of the village of Onarga. The first trustees elected March 16, 1863 were Charles H. Wood, G. G. Webb, Winslow Woods, Cyrus Austin, and Richard A. Hungerford. March 30, 1876, it was organized under the general village charter.

Allen Pinkerton, the famous detective and founder of the Pinkerton Agency, purchased a large tract of land (254.22 acres) in 1864. He left it remain in its original condition of raw prairie for several years. He later sold several small tracts of land including twenty-five acres for the site of the Iroquois County fair, operated by the Iroquois County Agricultural Society. In 1873 he began his idea of a prairie farm, "the acme of western rural development," and after seven years of labor and great expense, "The Larches" became the model farm of Iroquois County. Over 1000 evergreens, 85,000 larch and many maple trees were planted on the grounds, and the orchard contained pear, quince, cherry, and 2000 apple trees. A modern home resembling a southern mansion was built. In addition there were two greenhouses, barns, stables, corn crib, ice house, and fruit house, as well as a snuggerly or wine cellar adjoining the resi-

dence. An artificial lake one hundred feet long was at the rear of the house; marble and terra cotta vases further beautified the grounds. Although time has caused much deterioration, the house still stands.

There are five known cemeteries in Onarga township. One is at Del Rey, known as the Lehigh cemetery. The Onarga cemetery, organized in 1858, contains the graves of the Timothy Websters (father and son) shot as Civil War spies and made famous by Allen Pinkerton's book, *The Spy of the Rebellion*. In addition there are the Frame, Pangborn, and Jefferson cemeteries.

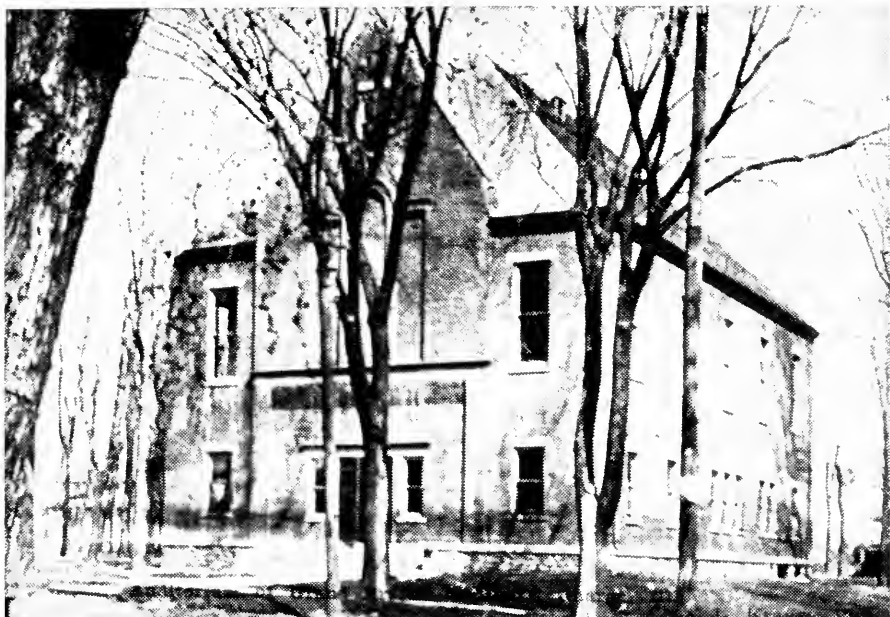
The first school was organized in 1836 in the Lehigh cabin, with neighborhood schools being added, until in 1880, there were thirteen. The first village school was built in 1856. The present two-story brick school was built in 1867; an addition with an unusual mansard roof was built in 1872, and the gymnasium in 1937. As early as 1865, separate schools for Negro children were organized, but were suspended and the students attended the public schools. The first high school class, consisting of five girls, graduated from the Onarga High School in 1880. The first male graduate was F. L. Brodie in 1883, who had been born a slave in Windsor, South Carolina. At the age of sixteen, he learned the alphabet, entered the Onarga schools in 1878, and at the age of twenty-two, studied at Biddle University. Ordained in 1888, he became a minister and a teacher.

Private schools have also played an important part in the history of Onarga Township. The Rev. John Thomas, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, opened a select school known as the Onarga Institute in 1862. Pupils numbered over one hundred. This school was suspended in 1872.

The educational convention of Middleport District of the Methodist Church met in Onarga on June 10, 1863, and voted to establish a seminary. Onarga was chosen as the location and the people of Onarga raised \$7000 for this purpose. A three-story building was completed in 1864, costing \$11,100. The school achieved great renown as a "high grade seminary" and continued until 1918, when it opened as a school for boys stressing military training. The following year the school was leased to J. Edward Bittinger, who, with his sons Leigh N. and Lyle M., operated the school until 1952. Since then, it has operated under the management of the Grand Prairie Seminary board with Col. Leslie E. Adams, superintendent. The school consists of an office and dormitory, infirmary, class room building, gymnasium and auditorium.

With the sale of shares at \$5.00 and with the donation of one hundred fifty books, a library association was formed in 1858. In 1863 a building was erected in which the library continued operation until 1870 from taxes assessed against the shareholders. The library was donated to the village in 1872, and in 1907 the present Andrew Carnegie library was built, now containing over 8000 volumes.

The first newspaper in the township was the *Onarga Mercury* first published in 1859. Following this paper was the *Onarga Advertiser* in 1865



Auditorium of the Grand Prairie Seminary in Onarga, Illinois taken in 1911. This school is now known as Onarga Military School.

which merged with the *Grand Prairie Review* in 1866. The *Onarga Review* started publication in 1865, and the *Courier* in 1870; in 1872 these papers merged and have since been in continuous publication. The present owner of the *Onarga Leader-Review*, Marvin M. Craig, who purchased the paper in 1939, is the oldest publisher in the county in length of continuous ownership and operation of a newspaper.

First mention of church services was in 1835 when pastors held services in the homes. Louise Wright taught a Sunday School in 1837. In 1838 a Methodist Church was organized with the services being held in the log cabin schoolhouse. The church, built in 1856, was the first in the county. The present Methodist Church was built in 1924.

The Presbyterians held meetings as early as 1856, and the church was founded in 1857 with the edifice built in 1859. The Christian Church was organized in 1877; the Methodist Church in Del Rey was organized in 1875. Other denominations who have had churches in the township include the United Brethren, Baptist, Episcopalian, Society of Friends, and Negro churches. Churches now holding regular services are the Methodist, Christian, First United Presbyterian, Trinity Lutheran, and two Pilgrim Holiness groups.

The 1960 census showed Onarga having 1397 residents. Two main highways, state routes 45 and 54, pass through the town. Interstate 57

is under construction. The small settlement of Del Rey south of Onarga is unincorporated.

Grain farming, livestock production and the nurseries are the principal industries. In addition to many professions and businesses, the other industries include the Louis Melind Company which manufactures marking devices, the Ficklin Machine Company, the Electrical Components plant, the Gibson Transfer Company, and the home office of the Farmers Pioneer Mutual Insurance Company.



Papineau Township

Papineau Township is located directly south of the Kankakee-Iroquois County line. Beaver Creek runs through the center east to west. The ground in the township is rather sandy and was not as strong as found in the western and southern parts of the county. Now however, that the latest means of fertilization and caring for the ground have been obtained, it is very good land for growing corn, wheat, oats, and beans. In the late 1800's, there were two railroads running through the township which made it fairly easy to insure a farmer's crops to market. This is one of the many reasons why the settlers had chosen to settle here. At that time, with the two railroads, the Chicago & Eastern, and the Cincinnati, Lafayette, and Chicago, running through the township, the farmers were certain to get the best price for their grain, with one railroad running straight through to Chicago, and the other to Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and the East.

In the early 1840's, the first settlers were beginning to settle in the area then called Weygandt by the Dutch settlers for a huge family of Weygandts who lived here. The area around Weygandt was very nearly covered with trees, and in addition the land along the creek offered much needed protection against the violent winter winds. The trees were a ready source of lumber to build their log cabins, and the acorns and berries in the thick woods were quite adequate to feed the pigs and other animals the settlers raised.

Henry Jones, the settlement's earliest permanent settler, arrived around 1837. Although he produced a very large family, many in the family died, it is believed, as a result of the terrible scourge of cholera in 1855. Nearly one-half of the residents in the area were killed by this dread sickness, but Henry Jones' family suffered the greatest loss.

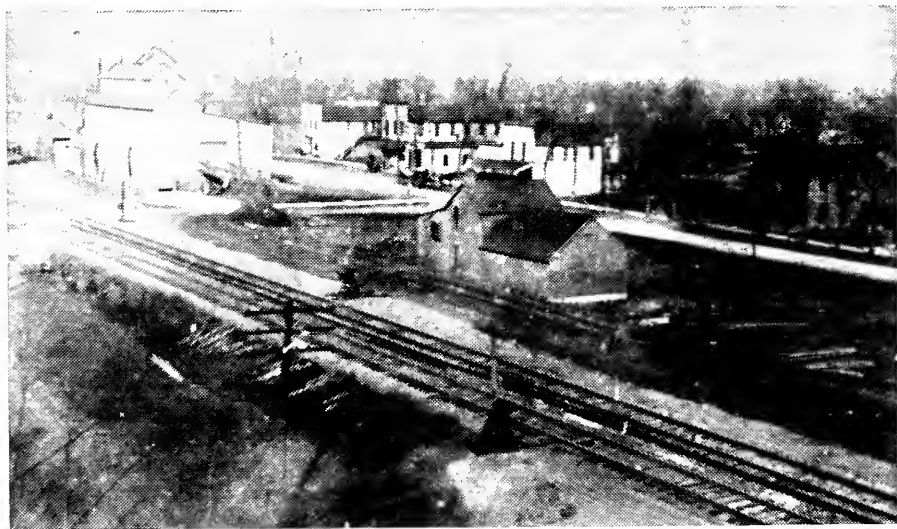
Located at a point just north of the creek, the first merchandise store for the settlement was established by George Roush. Here, he sold "dry goods" and "wet groceries," consisting of tobacco, gun powder, lead, flour and baking goods, and a variety of pills and liniments.

Another of the very first establishments in the settlement of Weygandt was the tavern called Democrat, named by "Long John" Wentworth, of Chicago, representative in Congress at that time. Allen Rakestraw owned this place for many years, and his brother William kept the post office there.

Around 1850, the French Canadians, still bitter over the battle of 1837 and 1838, which they lost to Britain, began to settle around the area of Weygandt. With them came many changes, one of the first being to change the name of the settlement, from Weygandt, which their French tongues could not pronounce, to the name Papineau, after their beloved French Canadian General who led them in their fight for freedom from the British in 1837 and 1838. It is said that these people idolized this gallant general who single handedly recruited an army of patriots to fight an impossible battle with the British. General Papineau was born



The Stadt Blankenburg Hotel in Papineau, Illinois. This building is now a family dwelling.



Main Street looking northeast in Papineau, Illinois

October, 1786, and died September, 1871, after a lifetime of almost 90 years.

With the coming of the French Canadians in 1850, was a man named Noel LeVasseur, fur trader and government agent, who settled around Bourbonnais Grove. He was said to have been an extremely generous man, and without his never-ending help, many of the settlers in this area would not have made it. Many of the settlers lost their crops in the heavy rains and floods that were known to come every seven years, and LeVasseur was very good to these people.

One man that LeVasseur was known to have helped considerably was a man named Anthony Lottinville, who with his wife and seven children were aboard the ill-fated steamer, *Atlantic*, headed for Detroit, when it collided with another ship and sank in 1851. Only 120 people survived the collision, among them, Lottinville and his entire family. Lottinville's good fortune was evident only with his family, however, as everything he owned in the world went down with the ship. When the family arrived in Bourbonnais, Noel LeVasseur gave him the money to make a new start. Lottinville located himself on Section 22, range 12 on the creek.

Lottinville was a self-educated man, and since there was no school until ten years later, Lottinville taught his five sons at home. All of these men became leaders in the community, and their names are all mentioned in the records of the township. They had very good business sense and were very much an asset to the community of that time.

Another of the first settlers of Papineau, was a man named Joseph DeLude, who settled there in 1850. DeLude was certain that he could become rich with a sawmill which he wanted to build on the creek. He dammed the creek and built his sawmill but later sold it to Moses Langelier and returned to Bourbonnais.

The first school in Papineau was believed to have been started in 1861 and was taught by a Miss Dilly. The first doctor to establish himself near the settlement around 1871 was Dr. D. K. Cornell. Later he was believed to have owned a considerable amount of land around the area. The first coroner for the community was L. W. Critser.

The first church built around Papineau was the Methodist Church in 1867, a structure 30' by 50', built at a cost of \$3,300. In 1873, however, the structure was leveled by a tornado and was replaced at a considerably smaller amount of \$350.

When the Chicago, Danville, & Vincennes Railroad (now the C. & E. I.) was built, there was some question as to what the town would donate, but since there was no town plat and no organization, nothing was done by the village. Later, a tax was voted on to tax the railroad on land it occupied, and the vote was passed 47 to 0, but, there seems to have been quite a job in collecting it. A few years later it was voted by the people of Papineau to give the same railroad, \$6,350 in bonds to maintain a permanent depot in the town; however, there is no record of



Coliseum in Papineau, Illinois which is in use today.



4800 GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH, PAPINEAU, ILL.

The German Lutheran Church in Papineau, Illinois which has been destroyed by fire.

this being done and so the records show the bonds were liquidated.

In the fall of 1870, Rice, Lottinville, & Co. built a depot for the railroad, north of Beaver Creek, erected a set of scales there and began buying corn and livestock. The next spring, the new depot and business was moved to the new townsite.

In 1872, the Roman Catholic Church was built and the attending priests were Rev. Rouquier of Beaverville, and Rev. Lettellier of St. Anne. The church had no priest of its own, and when several years later, this church was nearly demolished by a severe gale, it was never restored, according to the records.

The village of Papineau was incorporated as a village in 1874. In the town's first election, Fabian Langdoe was president, Thomas Lottinville, A. P. Shipley, Octave Laplante, Ezra Savoie, and John Massey, trustees: C. P. Lottinville, Clerk; Joseph Laveaux, treasurer.

The first store erected in the newly incorporated village of Papineau was put up by Savoie & Barney and carried a general stock of goods. The next store was built by Hubert LePage. Soon he sold his store to Barney & Company. In 1874, Thomas Lottinville bought Savoie's interest in the store, and in 1876, Charles and Henry, his brothers, were taken in as partners, which venture proved to be a very successful partnership.

Today, the town of Papineau is very small, consisting of the post office, a general store and locker, a coliseum which years ago was famous for its square dances in the ballroom. There is still a grain elevator there, but an implement establishment which burned a few years ago, as well as a garage have never been restored. Also, there are a few individual businesses. There are around 300 people in the township, many of whom are descendants of the first settlers.



Pigeon Grove Township

Pigeon Grove Township is bounded on the north by Ash Grove and on the south by Ford and Vermilion counties. Pigeon Grove was the last township in Iroquois County to be organized, in the year 1876.

It has always been a guess as to why this area was so long overlooked. It was not unknown because many different cattle raisers grazed their herds on the rich prairie grass and then drove them to Chicago or sent them by train to other places. The area lay between Fountain Creek Township and Loda Township. An Indian trail which was a much traveled route ran through it from Blue Grove to Spring Creek at Buckley, a distance of 25 miles. The Illinois Central Railroad, which was finished through Illinois in September 1856, became interested in this area and helped to develop this township at this time.

Because of the keen business interests of the railroad, a plan was evolved which brought cattle raisers into a mutual agreement by which large herds of cattle were brought to Loda and Buckley, unloaded and allowed to graze on the railroad right of way until they were ready for market, then reloaded and sent into Chicago by I. C. Railroad. This plan worked for some time, and if the cattle invaded other property, there was no special fuss made about it. These cattle came from Texas and Oklahoma, or Indian Territory, as it was then called. This plan worked until a disease called Spanish Fever broke out among the Texas cattle. Many died and it spread to the cattle belonging to the farmers around this area. This loss of cattle greatly concerned the farmers, and legal help was employed. They were successful in stopping the shipment of cattle to this area by interstate legal intervention. Soon things settled down and local farmers pastured their cattle wherever it seemed most convenient.

Then a firm named Milk, Burchard and Taylor, from Indiana bought 1700 head of cattle in Louisiana. This state had not been excluded in the interstate legal battle which was supposed to be settled. The cattle were unloaded at Loda and grazed on the Illinois Central right of way as well as in the Pigeon Grove area. This time a disease called Milk Fever again attacked the cattle, and the local cattle began to die. There was consternation followed by fights and battles and legal proceedings. The local people hired Addison Goodell of Loda and John A. Koplin of Buckley to represent them. Mr. Milk came with Attorney T. P. Bonfield of Kankakee to represent him. There were many claims and Mr. Milk tried to pay them all. There were even claims where cattle never were owned. The "Cattle War" was a long tradition in that area and ended the importation of foreign cattle and also ended a certain discontent and disagreement locally.

All this time Wm. Cissna, who came to this area in 1866 and who with his brother Stephen had bought 1200 acres of land in the Pigeon Grove area, was feeding about 700 cattle a year besides about 500 hogs. He was interested in the area and helped to organize this territory into a township. He gave his support but he never wanted any part of politics.

In 1875 a petition was signed by 100 persons to organize a new township between Loda and Fountain Creek Townships. Supervisor Carey presented the petition but it was turned down.

Another petition was filed asking that the new township be named Grange, but it too was turned down. Finally another petition with 130 names and one from Fountain Creek Township signed by 62 members requested the new township be named Pigeon Grove. William Flemming and Moses Stroup worked hard to get the petition granted and it was finally granted in 1876.

The first election was held in Zion school. William Flemming was the first supervisor; Clark Martin, clerk; J. W. Gosslee, assessor; Myron Cunningham, collector; J. W. Gosslee and Moses Stroup, justices of the peace.

The name of Pigeon Grove was given because of the many pigeons that inhabited the grove. There were hundreds of them and branches could be heard breaking with loads of them. The township was soon divided into farms, and in 1881 William Cissna who had been working to bring a branch railroad to this area tried the Illinois Central. They refused to consider his proposal. Then he with two businessmen and cattle raisers, William Clayton and William Goodwine went to the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad. They must have pleaded their case very effec-



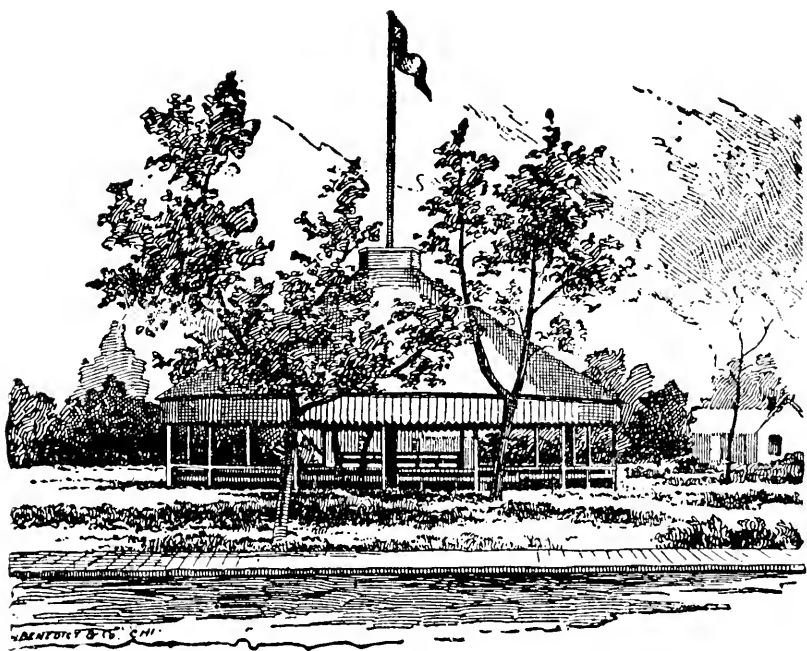
Park House Hotel which was located north of the Cissna Park State Bank in Cissna Park.

tively, for their request was granted. The branch was built in the north-east corner of the township, and on January 1, 1881, the silver spike was driven in.

The next day activities began, and William "Uncle Bill" Cissna proceeded to build his town. The plat was made—a lot allowed for a park right in the center of town. The hotel with thirty rooms was started on the east corner of Second Street and Garfield Avenue. This was to be his home and he called it the Park House. He lived there until his death in 1897. Before this he had lived in the first house built in the grove. The lumber for the house was brought from Chicago by his brother, Stephen, who lived there. It is still standing in the small grove east of Route 49, south of the town and belongs to the Farney family.

The first building to be completed was a restaurant on the corner of Koplin Avenue and Third Street. Koplin Avenue was named for John A. Koplin of Buckley who was Mr. Cissna's banker.

The next building to be finished was the store building on the corner of Second and Garfield streets. This building was erected by Isaac Miller Hamilton and Tunis Young, both coming from Ash Grove Township. They ran a successful general store and after a few years decided to start a bank. With the help of Uncle Bill Cissna and his patronage the business became a big success. Other businesses started: Sylvester Rose erected a hardware store that still stands and is the Masonic Hall now; an elevator



Pavilion in Village Park of Cissna Park in 1892.

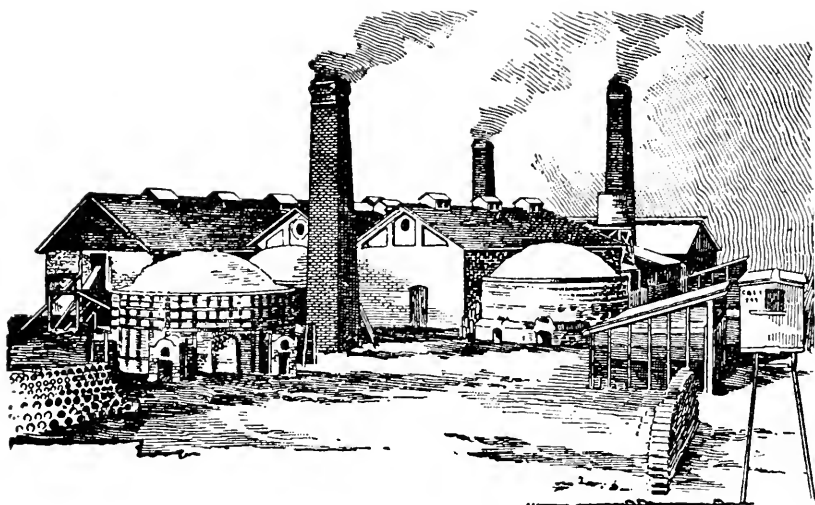
was built across from the depot. It was the first one and was built by James Busey. Business was on the way.

In the meantime the township was being settled. Owing to the proximity of the Lake Erie and Western Railroad that ran from Peoria to Tipton, Indiana, travel was convenient and brought from the Peoria area, Morton, and Gridley a clan of immigrants from Germany, France, Switzerland and Ireland. Many of them were Mennonites and brought their customs with them. Land was cheap and the new comers were frugal and knew how to work. Their limited European way of life had trained them to be frugal. The ponds were drained. A tile factory built in 1884 by George Songer made tile from a clay pit on the west end of the village. It was a big business: twenty men were employed, rolling the mud into tiles and then burning them in kilns for 48 hours. There was a great demand for them, and often wagons would be lined up a half mile to get their turn at a load. Eventually the clay was exhausted and another pit was dug south of the tile plant. This was exhausted and after the factory burned down, Mr. Songer who had been the first mayor and a very respected citizen, moved to Hoopeston with his family. Later they went to Texas and made tile there.

Cattle raising still continued, and flax, oats, and corn were the principal crops. Flax was soon discontinued because it took too much strength



Main Street in Cissna Park, Illinois in 1899. The man in the buggy is the late Dr. W. R. Roberts



The Songer Tile Factory in Cissna Park around 1892.

from the soil. Schools were built. Cissna Park built a two-room school, followed later by a brick school, and in 1940 by a Community high school.

The Young and Hamilton Bank remained in business. Mr. Hamilton studied Law under Attorney Free P. Morris of Watseka and became an attorney. Later he was State Representative. When Mr. Cissna died, Isaac Miller Hamilton was appointed his executor with his bond set at \$500,000. Since there were no bonding companies then, he went through the district to get all the signatures he could on his bond, and thirty-seven farmers signed it.

In 1904 the Young and Hamilton bank sold to the Amsler Brothers, Clyde and Art, of Broadlands. They were here only a short time when they sold the bank to E. L. Weise of Broadlands. He brought with him Sam O. Brown as cashier. Mr. Brown, Supervisor of the township for a number of years, was influential in bringing State Highway 49 through the village. The bank closed during the depression but was brought back into business by the Fredericks, a family of Paxton. Other supervisors were Joe Burt, Dr. W. R. Roberts, Albert Zbinden, and Aaron Bauer since 1945.

The township has many rich farms. The buildings are well kept, the land is well taken care of, and although it was the last to be organized, its resources are tops in the county. Land that was bought from the government for \$2 an acre now sells up to \$700 per acre. The revenue gained from sales tax always rates above any other town of the same size anywhere.

The railroad still carries out much of the grain as well as trucks. Livestock is being raised to a greater extent than it was twenty-five years ago, and many of the smaller farms are being merged into larger ones.

Churches play an important part in the community's welfare. The

Apostolic Christian Church, which is the largest located in Fountain Creek township, holds a membership of over 400 members, and the majority of rural people have built this church. The Union Church has stood on the corner of Church and Third Streets since 1891 and is interdenominational. Other churches include the Methodist Church on the corner of Fourth and Koplin, the Lutheran Church on Fourth Street, and the Christian Apostolic on Garfield.



Prairie Green Township

Prairie Green Township is located in the southeast corner of Iroquois County. No creeks or rivers transverse this township; the north fork of the Vermilion River cuts off the southeast corner, and just north of this fork is a ridge. The water on the south flows south toward the Wabash River.

The early settlers chose this high ground to take up residence, the first settlers coming in the early 1850's. Robert Finch came and settled in the southeast part of the township in 1853. Also at about the same time, Abner Mitchell, Kendall Shankland, R. Adsit, and Mr. Pixley settled.

Prairie Green was at first a part of Crab Apple Township, now Stockland. The legal division took place in the winter of 1858. Kendall Shankland, Robert Finch, H. C. Smith, and a few others were the leading men in obtaining the independence of Crab Apple and forming Prairie Green.

The very first settlers in the county settled near the streams and timbers. Few pioneers were brave enough to squat out on the prairies because many thought then that the prairies would never be completely settled. The few that came found that deer were so plentiful that they were never without venison. The settlers that lived here would mount a horse bareback and indulge in the invigorating sports of chasing wolves or running down a deer.

In 1857 John Greer began to break sod in the southwest corner, although he did not live there until some years afterward. Breaking sod in those days was a good business for the favored few who owned a "breaking" plow. Designed for five or six oxen, the breaker was a large plow cutting a furrow from twenty inches to two feet. The depth was regulated by a lever, and considerable skill was needed when starting the first furrow, often a half mile or more in length.

As soon as the first grass began to appear in the spring, the season for plowing began and did not end until July. Such large farmers as Finch and Shankland had one or more of these breaking plows running. After doing their own work, they would break for their neighbors, charging three to four dollars per acre.

The teams were allowed to feed on the grasses they were plowing under, usually being "coralled" after dark to prevent straying. No one had the idea that the prairie sod could be plowed with horses. This was the reason that the prairies were not settled more rapidly at first. As soon as it was discovered that two or three horses with a ten or twelve-inch plow could turn nearly as much as an ox team, the prairies were soon dotted with little shanties and neat cottages and the era of real improvement began.

The first road was the old Attica road, running in a northwest direction toward Milford. This road had to go around ponds, sloughs, and marshes; therefore, the road ran along the higher ground.

John Greer owned about 1000 acres in this township. When he died,

in honor of his son, he willed the money for the erection of Greer college in Hoopston as well as an endowment of land to maintain it. In addition, he left money for the erection of Greer Hall at the cross road of the township. A sum of money was left, the interest of which was to maintain the building. Greer Hall was erected in 1893. This was the voting precinct until a few years ago when it was torn down and replaced by a consolidated grade school. A fire station, erected across the road from it, is used as the township building.

There have never been any stores or post office in the limits of Prairie Green. A railroad transversing the township north and south in the center of the township, was built in the early 1900's. Formerly the Wabash Railroad, it is now known as the Milwaukee Road.

Among the early settlers were J. Crawford Pugh, a blacksmith, and a miller whose mill was located in the east part of the township near the Finch Place. Horse power was used to grind corn. He conceived the idea of making a huge wheel to be turned by the wind. He gathered all the men available to raise it. It was successful for a while, but, because of the uncertainty of the wind, it was a failure. He also kept a small stock of groceries. The place acquired the quaint name of Goose Nibble.

Much flax was raised in the early days. In 1870 Samuel Hazel, who owned a lot of land in the southwest corner of the township, raised 1000 bushels of flax seed. Upon delivery of the flax to Danville, he received two dollars a bushel. Agriculture and stock raising have always been the chief industries in the township.

While speaking of industries in this area, mention must be made of a broom factory of Robert Finch in the southeast part of the township. His son, Fremont, was superintendent of the working force. The low price of broom corn induced Mr. Finch to try manufacturing. Out of his crop in 1879 he made about 350 dozen brooms. An expert broom maker, he made his own machine.

Prairie Green township in the early days was in the front rank among educational interests of the county. In 1858 the township was organized into four districts. Prairie Green and Lamont School buildings were built soon afterward. RoundTop a few years later. RoundTop became more famous than all the others as here so many organizations were organized. Also the First Church of Christ and the Methodist Churches had their first meetings. RoundTop stood where the William Gurley home now stands. It got its name because at a distance the roof had a round appearance. The building was octagonal in shape as was the roof.

The Prairie Green Qaudrille Band, organized in 1879, consisted of 12 instruments; three first violins, two second violins, three German flutes, two flageolets, and two violcellos. The leader was R. G. Cowan; treasurer, H. W. Cowan; and secretary, R. N. Benholm.

Later in the 1870's, there were seven school districts. RoundTop was replaced with Maple Grove about a mile northeast. There were also Victor, Prairie Green, Willow Brook, College Center, (nicknamed Frog

Pond) Lamont, and Pleasant Hill. Old records which were found in these schoolhouses reveal that school convened in September and closed during the month of November. December, January, and February, the winter term, enabled older pupils to attend. Some were twenty-one years old. Often there were as many as sixty attending. The spring term of April, May, and June was attended mostly by the younger ones. Only one school house now replaces the old ones built in 1950. The new school house now stands where the old John Greer Hall stood and is used for the two first grades of Prairie Green and Lovejoy Townships. All other grades, including high school, go to Wellington.

The religious history of Prairie Green is perhaps similar to all other communities of the area. A Methodist class was formed at Abner Mitchell's home early in 1858. There was preaching around at the homes, but after the school houses were built, meetings were held in them. Every winter revivals of great interest would take place in these school houses. A Sunday School was organized in 1878 at the Maple Grove School. J. W. Dixon was superintendent for a number of years, M. Garrison, secretary. In the early 1880's the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church was constructed. A small society of United Brethren met in the Willow Brook school. The Prairie Green Church of Christ, organized about 1858, met at first in homes, at RoundTop, and in 1875 a building, costing approximately one thousand dollars, was erected on section 12. It was known at that time as the Hope Church of Christ but later was changed to the Prairie Green Church of Christ. The old school houses are gone and the Pleasant Hill Church closed in 1964. Instead of the old Hope Church of Christ, a new Prairie Green Church of Christ was erected near the crossroads at Greer. This building, costing \$103,000, was dedicated July 6, 1958.



Ridgeland Township

Ridgeland Township occupies the western part of what was originally Onarga Township. At the annual meeting of the Iroquois County Board of Supervisors in 1878, a petition was presented, asking that a part of Onarga Township be organized into a new township with the name of "Ridge." This division was approved, and the first township election was held in the Ridgeville school house in April, 1879.

The first officers of the township were Supervisor, A. R. Butler; town clerk, F. R. Jameson; assessor, D. B. Moffat; and collector, William M. Dinning. At the first meeting of the township board the name of the township was changed to Ridgeland to avoid confusion with the township of Ridge in Jackson county, Illinois.

This township was originally all prairie with a number of ridges extending east and west in direction. Spring Creek rising in Ford County on the west, enters Ridgeland near its southwest corner, following irregularly in a northeasterly course nearly to the center of the township where it bends to flow southeasterly to leave the township on the eastern boundary. Artesian wells were also a source of water in the township.

Among the first of the settlers in this township was John Northrup who arrived in the early 1850's. He built the first mill and made the first brick that was made in the township. He also was one of the builders of the old court house in Middleport.

Other early settlers included Benjamin P. Norville who came in 1854, and Garner Oliver who followed shortly after Norville. Oliver was re-



General Store in Thawville, Illinois.

sponsible for building the first blacksmith shop in the township. Ridgeland Township grew rather slowly until the Illinois Central Railroad was built through the township.

The Village of Ridgeville was laid out by Garner Oliver and others, five miles southwest of Gilman and three miles west of Onarga. It was a shipping point on the Illinois Central railroad line going to Springfield.

The larger village in Ridgeland Township is Thawville. This village was named in honor of William Thaw, a prominent railroadman from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mr. Thaw was a large stockholder in the Gilman, Clinton and Springfield Railroad that later became a part of the Illinois Central System.

Most of the land of Thawville today was originally owned by Mr. Taylor John. Thawville was first platted about 1871. Although an attempt to incorporate Thawville failed in 1897, another attempt was successful in 1903.

The Congregational Church was the first church organized in the community. The members of the congregation met in the home of Edmund F. Hoover in the winter of 1859 and 1860. The early settlers were mostly from Connecticut.

In 1879 a group of residents of the then Willow Grove School community became interested in organizing another church. These people were Methodists and United Brethren in denomination, but the Thawville Methodists became a reality as a result of these efforts. The Lutherans of Thawville became organized in about 1887, holding their serv-



Homestead in Ridgeland Township.

ices in the Congregational Church until 1896. In that year they began construction of their own structure which was first used the following year.

The first school in the township was built east of the present Route 54. The first school building in Thawville was built in 1876. Any student who wished to pursue an education beyond the grade school level provided in the township could attend the Grand Prairie Seminary in Onarga.



Sheldon Township

Sheldon Township was named after a village within its limits and was organized on April 7, 1868, by the election of the stipulated necessary officials. The number of votes polled at this organization meeting was recorded as 99, and the assessed valuation of property was \$120,000. At the present time the registered voters number 927 and the last assessment of real property reached more than \$8,000,000.

Also embraced within the township is the unincorporated village of Haxby located at the Illinois-Indiana state line and U. S. Route 24. This settlement is more familiarly known as Effner for the railway terminal located just east of the state line and south of the highway in Indiana. In the southwestern portion of the township is Darrow Station, consisting of a grain elevator, a church, and a residence. For many years another such station existed in the north central portion known as Eastburn Station consisting of an elevator, a church, and a couple of residences. During its early history this station had the distinction of having regular passenger train services.

The timber was the scene of all settlements until 1848 when Zedic Parks, who had been living near Iroquois, marched out into the sea of prairie grass and pitched his tent on the road leading from Lafayette to Chicago. Jesse Eastburn, Sr. and his family were the first settlers in Sheldon Township coming from Adams County, Ohio, in 1832 when he was sixty-two years of age. He had nine children, four sons coming to Illinois and settling near their father's homestead. The eldest son and family had migrated to the prairies before his father and was one of the three first settlers in Iroquois County.

The prairie swamps of Sheldon township, "the place that seemed unfit for habitation of man," became a fertile countryside and, by 1870, was dotted with prosperous farms and comfortable homes. The first road within the township skirted the timber in the northwest portion. It led to Chicago via Iroquois, following the Old Hubbard Trail. Another was opened through the prairie from Lafayette to Chicago, also via Iroquois. Owing to the late settlement of the prairies, there were few permanent roads until the turn of the century. By 1880 the township had laid out roads on all the section lines. Bond issues were floated for road improvements. Sheldon township was the first community in Illinois to follow this procedure. The road between the town of Sheldon and the village of Haxby or Effner was built in 1904, and six years later (1910) the roads running south from town were built. Since then improvements have been made steadily until at the present time Sheldon township has approximately seventy miles of all weather roads.

Three railroads cross the township. The Toledo Peoria and Warsaw (TP&W) was completed during the winter of 1859-1860. In January, 1860 a switch was constructed and named Sheldon for an official of the railroad by the same name. The road is now operated by the Pennsylvania system. In 1871-1872 the Cincinnati, Lafayette and Chicago Rail-

road was built. Later it became the Big Four (CCC&STL) and is now under the jurisdiction of the New York Central organization. These two roads gave access to the markets in all directions. In 1905-1906 a third system was constructed, transversing the township from north to south, cutting it near the center.

This was known as the Walsh Road since it was promoted by a financier by that name. It connected Chicago and points south; its main purpose was to move heavy freight long distances, mostly loads of coal and grain. It is now a part of the Milwaukee system.

Purely an agriculture community, the industries developed were prompted by the need to dispose of farm products. Five grain elevators comprise the main industries of the township. Rated one of the top five townships in fertility of soil in the United States, grain storage has been a prime factor in its development. Sheldon's first business man started buying grain in 1859. His descendants have continued in that business until the present day. The first steam elevator was built in 1870. The Bishop Hominy Company, organized in 1881, continued in operation until 1945 when it was purchased by the Farmers Cooperative Elevator. It is interesting to note that five Bishop generations have lived in Sheldon and engaged in the grain business. This business later formed the nucleus of the Cleveland Grain Company. Many additions and improvements have been made during the year. Since 1924 it has been operated by four nationally known grain brokerages between Chicago and Cincinnati. A small neighborhood elevator, built by A. M. Eastburn at Eastburn Station in 1891, is still in operation, managed by a descendant of the builder. Today it has a capacity of approximately ten thousand bushels. During the winter of 1896-1897 a company of farmers of the community organized and started the operation of the Sheldon Elevator Company. The first corn was bought at sixteen cents per bushel and the first oats at fourteen cents. Few communities had tried such a venture, and at



Corner of South 4th and West Center in Sheldon, Illinois. The Opera House was upstairs in this building.



Bishop Hominy Co., Sheldon, Illinois.



Main Street of Sheldon, Illinois in 1900.

first the infant industry received very little cooperation. But by 1901, the old building was too small and a new one was constructed, paid for out of the profits of the company. The growth has continued through the years and the facilities have been enlarged, modernized, and the services expanded. There has also been a reorganization in recent years, and the enterprise is now known as the Sheldon Farmers Cooperative. It is the oldest organization of its kind in Illinois. Shortly after the building of the Walsh (Milwaukee) railroad an elevator was built south and west of the village by the Herron Patterson Grain Company. Located near the Darrough family homesteads, it became known as Darrow Station. A few years later a group of neighboring farmers organized and purchased the facilities. This organization has prospered and now exists under the name of the Darrow Cooperative Grain Company. The newest and most modern establishment of this type is a privately owned facility built in 1950 with a storage capacity of 500,000 bushels of grain.

More recently three new enterprises have sprung up in the community. Two are definitely farm or agricultural industries, and, in a manner of speaking, the third could also be so classified. A. H. Hoffman Incorporated, manufacturers of fertilizers and plant food, has been operating a packaging and distributing plant for several years. About three years ago a branch of Custom Farm Services, a company servicing farms with large quantity fertilizers of all kinds has begun operation. The third is the Lectro-Loader Corporation, manufacturers of trailer and boat hitches, which can also be adapted to use with certain farm implements.

From the beginning the settlers of Sheldon Township manifested an interest in and lent great support to the establishment of schools. It is recorded that as early as 1850 several terms of a "subscription" School was held in a log building on the farm of Jesse Eastburn. At that time there were only a half-dozen families living in the township. The first district school in Sheldon Township was built in 1859 and took in most of the southern area. A school, in a log structure, was conducted near the east edge of the village about this same time. A small frame building was the next building constructed in 1861 or 1862. After moving this building to a different site, a new one was built in 1876, and a high school course was added. The first class of six members graduated in 1878. In 1900 the construction of a brick structure was begun. With the completion of this building the high school curriculum was increased, and the high school became accredited. In 1940 an election was held, and the voters of the township voted to discontinue rural schools and to provide transportation to bring school children into the town schools. The old county school houses were abandoned.

As early as 1834 the United Brethren organization was formed with the first church building dedicated in 1875. About 1859 the Methodists held the organization meeting of that denomination in one of the school houses. The first Methodist Church was built in 1867. In 1886 the Presbyterian Church was organized. Prior to that time services of this

group had been held every two weeks in various places available. Now the Methodist people offered to allow them the use of their building. The first church building to meet the needs of this group was dedicated in December 1894. In 1966 these three separate groups united and now form the United Church of Sheldon. A movement for a Christian Church of Christ was started in 1890 by a group of women who had attended a missionary rally. The first services were held in the Opera House, but in 1891 a building was erected and dedication services were held in January 1892. About 1912 following a "tent revival," a group of neighbors in the vicinity of Darrow Station formed the Darrow Christian Church. A building was erected the next year. This group had been meeting irregularly in a nearby school house. During the summer of 1950 a group from Olivet College held a tent meeting in the interest of the Church of the Nazarene. Further services were held in the town hall, and during the fall the present church building was erected. At the present time four active religious groups are active in the community.



Stockland Township

Stockland Township is situated in the southeastern part of Iroquois County, and is bounded on the north by Sheldon, on the east by the Indiana state line, on the south by Prairie Green, and on the west by Milford. Stockland Township is nearly seven and a half miles in length north and south, and seven miles east and west with an area of about 33,914 acres. The only important stream is Sugar Creek, entering the township on the east side, in section 7. At first it flows west by north until it has passed what was once Crab Apple Grove; then it bends more to the south and continues in a somewhat southwesterly course, until it leaves the township near the line between section 18 and 19. The soil is exceedingly fertile and feed grain farming of corn, wheat, soybeans, some oats and small grain is the principal industry. The Summer estate is the largest farm under one management, comprising several acres of land which has been held in the family for over 100 years. Stockland Township boasts approximately 25 farms which are in hands of heirs of original owners for over 100 years. The township has many black top roads and good bridges. Stockland Township boasts one historical bridge, namely, the one over Sugar Creek, at Sugar Creek Cemetery. (Still attracting the attention of many travelers), the iron work on this bridge helped support the dome of the administration building at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Electric lights came into Stockland Township through the Central Illinois Power System to a few farm families. Later in 1938 the Eastern Illinois Power Cooperative came into existence and rural electrification came by degrees to farm homes until now, nearly all have the facilities of electrical equipment and appliances.

This township was formerly called Crab Apple, from a large grove of crab apple trees situated in the eastern part, and which at that time constituted the greatest continuous extent of timber in it, its estimated area being 70 acres. Just when the change of name was effected, or why it was done, does not clearly appear. The record of the township gave no account of proceedings which led to the change. Suffice it to say, the first record in which the name occurs is dated March 28, 1865, and as the previous entry is dated in the spring of 1864 and the name Crab Apple is there used, it is presumed that the change was made at some time during the year 1864, or between the dates above mentioned. The reason for the change is quite difficult to determine. Upon the question of a new name a great difference of opinion was manifested, until at length the name "Stockland" was suggested, and at once adopted. It has been told that Alba Honeywell, grandfather of Homer Beall Sr., suggested the name on account of the stock raised.

The first settlement in what is now the township of Stockland was made by Samuel Williamson who settled in Crab Apple Grove in March 1832. As late as 1850, not more than a dozen families had settled in Stockland Township. Stockland was peopled with a class exclusively engaged

in agricultural pursuits with corn and farm stock being the principal productions. There was no village in the township.

The people of Stockland Township were determined that their children should not experience the same neglect of a common school education that they had, so as the country improved, school districts were multiplied and school houses built. The first school, a log building, was built in 1850 on the south side of Sugar Creek west of the cemetery called "Brush College." The first teacher who taught in this school was William Williamson. Later in 1872, the township was divided into ten school districts with a school house in each district. The population of Stockland was estimated at 1200. This must have been the population



Stockland Methodist Church built in 1893 which was moved to Stockland in 1905 and is in use in 1968.

in the year of 1880 (H. W. Beckwith book), but the population today, 1967, is only about one half of that.

The first post office was established in 1854 at the J. H. Jones' house. The location of this place would be northwest of the village of Stockland and Mr. Jones was postmaster. It flourished for a year or two and then was discontinued. There was a mail carrier between Lafayette and Middleport via Milford, and this route took in the above post office; at this time there was no village in Stockland Township. The first public road located in this township was the Ottawa and Lafayette State road, running east through the central portion of the township to Indiana State line.

Township organization was effected April 1, 1856. Previous to this time, what is now known as Stockland formed a part of Milford precinct, with a voting place at Milford. When township organization was accomplished this township was named Crab Apple and together with Prairie Green formed a political township. This relation existed for a short time, and then they became separate townships. The first township election in Crab Apple was held at the Gothic school house, but afterward they were changed to the Vienna school house. This school was located within what is now the village of Stockland and was directly north of today's elevators and south of the consolidated school.

John H. Gillan, county surveyor of Iroquois County, on August 27, 1901, at the request of William M. Dawson and Christopher Truman, owners, subdivided and laid off into lots, streets, and alleys, 10 square acres of land out of the northwest corner of the S. W. quarter of Sec. 19, T. 25 N. R. 10 W. to be known as Dawson Park. The lots were numbered from 1 to 46 inclusive. This small village, bordered on the north by the Freeland Branch of the C & EI railroad, consisted of several homes, a



Bridge over Sugar Creek in Stockland Township that was purchased in 1893 at the close of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and moved to its present location where it is located today.

store, the United Brethren Church, a park, a corn elevator, and a railroad depot.

At the present time (1967) it consists of four houses, the small park, and an elevator now only used for storage. The original home built by Mr. William Dawson still remains a part of Dawson Park. He was the owner of a 200 acre farm joining this small village on the south.

The first religious society organized was a class of United Brethren in 1853. Six years later, this society succeeded in building a house for public worship at a cost of \$1000. Lumber for this building was hauled from Attica, Indiana, and Onarga, Illinois. It was situated on the left bank of Sugar Creek near where it was crossed by the state highway in the south half of section 17 and was named Sugar Creek Chapel.

The next church edifice to be erected in Stockland Township was the Antioch Christian Church. This was situated near the Milford-Stockland Township line in the extreme northwest corner of section 31. This building was the result of the planning and labors of the society which was organized in 1861. Meetings were held in the Gothic schoolhouse until 1867, when the chapel was built at a cost of \$1600. On January 12,



Stockland Townhall in Stockland Township.

1892 this building was destroyed by a fire caused by an over-heated stove.

No sooner had "Old Antioch" burned than plans were being made for the rebuilding of a place for Christian worship. A site was chosen one mile east of where "Old Antioch" stood, at what is known as the Fairview corner, located in the northwest corner of the northeast quarter of section 32, township 25, north range, 11 west. On September 25, 1842, a new "Christian Church" was dedicated, but later this building was struck by lightning and totally destroyed by the fire. Although the loss was keenly felt throughout the community, the congregation decided to disband. Most of the members affiliated with Milford or Stockland churches. A group of trees surrounds the spot where the church building stood.

Another religious group, the Methodists, was organized by Isabel Taylor, sister of Jennie Taylor Summer. Judge Samuel Williams of Woodland Methodist Church, knowing of their desire influenced them to form a nonprofit corporation for the purpose of teaching and worshipping under the Methodist conference. In 1892 the first Sunday School and church was held in the Samuel Nolin tenant farm house and later moved to the Mitchell school house and operated until the new Crab Apple M. E. Church building was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1893. This was located in section 9 between what is now known as the Nolin bridge and "Cutner" road (now leading to the popcorn plant). This same church was moved to the present location in Stockland in 1905. It was remodeled and rededicated in the fall of 1906 when it became officially known as the Stockland Methodist Church. The church building has been remodeled several times, an annex of two stories has been added to the main building containing modern classrooms and a reception room, which serves as a community center for all neighborhood activities. This is the only church now in Stockland Township.

The first school in Stockland that has previously been mentioned was the Vienna. Later a school house was built just a little south of where the present school now stands. This building burned and in 1916-1917 the present brick building was erected. In 1940 the schools in the township were consolidated. More room was needed, so in 1940 an addition was built and another in 1954. The Stockland Community Consolidated Grade School has an enrollment of over 100 pupils at the present time, (1967). School buses provide transportation for the pupils.

A Township High School unit was organized in 1907, and in September of that year seventeen girls were enrolled in the freshman class. The town hall was the school room until the brick building under construction was completed. This was the first township high school in Iroquois County and the first commencement was held in June 1911 with four graduates. B. A. Winans was the first principal.

The high school, because of its small enrollment, was ordered closed May, 1961, and students for high school are transported to the neighboring high schools in Wellington, Sheldon, or Milford, tuition being paid by home township.

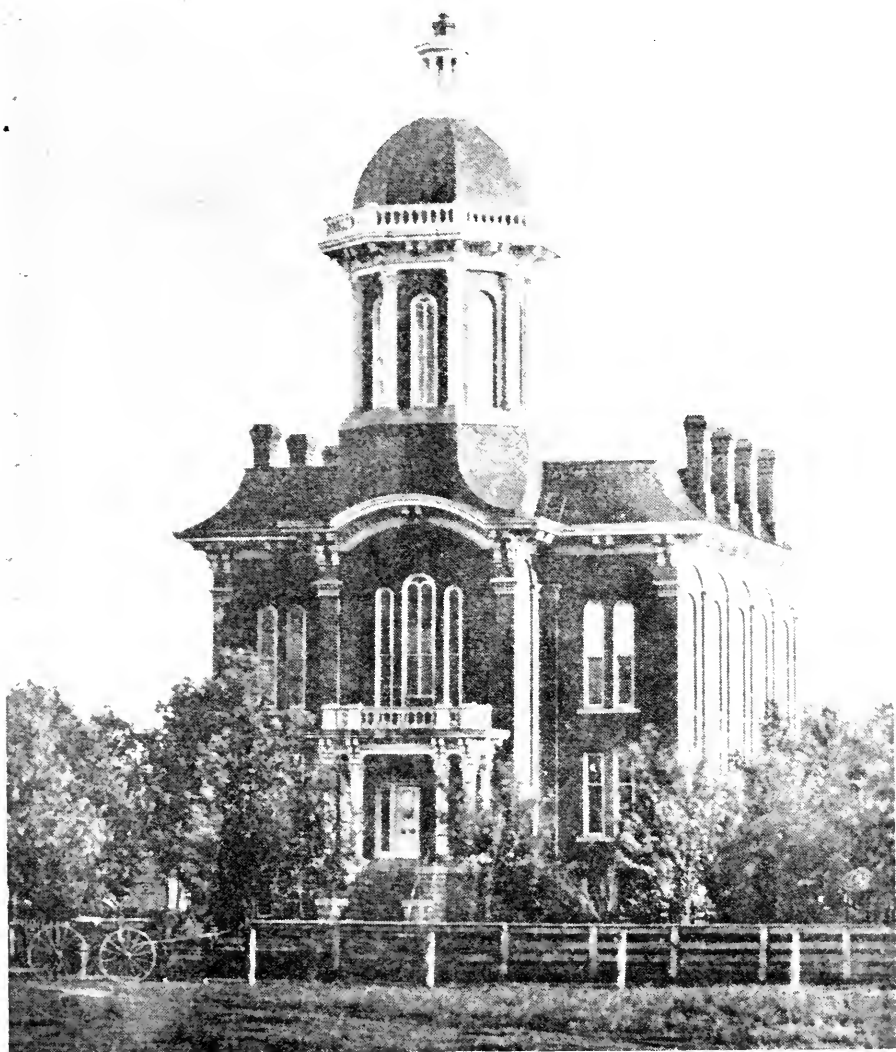


Stockland Township High School organized in 1907.



General Store in Stockland, Illinois in 1906.

Old Iroquois County Courthouse



1866 to 1881 (before 1st addition)



Iroquois County Historical Society

As a result of the growing interest in the history of Iroquois County a County Historical Society was organized in 1967. This local interest and the planning for the observance of the Illinois Sesquicentennial encouraged a group of citizens to make plans for the Iroquois County Historical Society. A charter to this organization was issued by the State of Illinois in May of 1967.

The Society was quite active in the Centennial Celebration that was held in Watseka in 1967 and has taken as a major project the restoration of the Old Iroquois County Courthouse on Cherry Street in Watseka. Much volunteer labor has caused this county landmark to become a site of historical interest and cultural value. It serves as the home for the Iroquois County Historical Museum as well as a center for community activities.

The present officers of the Historical Society are; President, Avery D. Shepherd of Gilman; Vice-president, Edward L. Davis of Onarga; Secretary, Mrs. Marvin M. Craig of Onarga; Treasurer, Mr. R. P. Roberts of Watseka; Directors, Mrs. Robert E. Meyer, Mrs. Wilbur Disosway, Mr. Joseph Kelley, Mr. Dale Nelson, Mr. Glenn Hamilton, Mr. Bernard Fleming, Mr. Charles Lundsberg, Mr. Wayne Rosenberger, Mrs. William Fox, Mr. John Bell, Mr. Kenneth Bauer, and Mrs. Warren Lockhart.



Officers of the Iroquois County Historical Society.

**Seated: (left to right) Major Edward L. Davis, Vice-President, Avery Shepherd, President.
Standing: (left to right) Mrs. Marvin M. Craig, Secretary, and Mr. R. P. Roberts, Treasurer.**



Board of Directors of the Historical Society.

Seated: (left to right) Mrs. Robert Meyer, Mrs. Wm. Fox and Mrs. Wilbur Disosway. Standing (left to right) Mr. Glenn Hamilton, Mr. Joseph Kelley, Mr. Charles Lundsberg and Mr. Bernard Fleming. Absent were Mr. John Bell, Mr. Wayne Rosenberger, Mr. Kenneth Bauer, Mrs. Warren Lockhart, Mr. Dale Nelson.



New German Lutheran Church in Papineau, Illinois.



Fording the Iroquois River at Old Texas.



Looking north on Charles Street in Beaverville, Illinois.



Lambert Co. elevator and Big 4 Depot in Beaverville, Illinois.



An early threshing outfit in Iroquois County.



A single binder operating.



A pair of binders operating in Iroquois County.



A one-row, horse-drawn corn picker.



Woodland's first concrete bridge built in 1911.



Fourth and Walnut Streets in Watseka Looking West.



Northwest corner Fourth and Walnut Streets in Watseka, early 1900's.





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